National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

NL-339 (r. 88/04) c

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN READING STRATEGIES AND READING HISTORIES OF ADOLESCENTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

BY

MARGARET MACKEY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

FACULTY OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1991

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-70282-6

Canada

845 THIRD AVENUE•NEW YORK, NY 10022
PHONE: 212-245-5500•FAX: 212-755-2972

RUSSELL GALEN
VICE PRESIDENT

SCOTT
MEREDITH
LITERARY
AGENCY, INC.

October 11, 1991

Ms. Margaret Mackey
4923 - 126 Street
Edmonton AB T6H 3W1

Via Fax c/o Terry Mackey

Dear Ms. Mackey:

Per your request in your letter of the 7th to my colleague Joshua Bilmes, this will express our permission for you to reprint Philip K. Dick's short story IMPOSTOR in your thesis, THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN READING STRATEGIES AND READING HISTORIES OF ADOLESCENTS, and in no more than 25 photocopies provided no copies are distributed commercially or sold for profit.

All best wishes,

Sincerely,

Russell Galen

RG:le

Murray Pollinger
LITERARY AGENT
222 Old Brompton Road, London, SW5 0BZ
Tel: 071-373 4711
Fax: 071-373 3775

Ms Margaret Mackey
4923 - 126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada

20 June 1991

Dear Ms Mackey

RE: MATILDA by Roald Dahl

Thank you for your letter requesting permission to reproduce a page from the above title in your thesis on adolescent reading.

We are happy to grant you the permission that you require. Rights granted are non-exclusive, one-use only, English language quotation rights for use in Canada only. These rights are granted on the strict understanding that you make full acknowledgement to the author, to the title of the work and to the publishers, Jonathan Cape Ltd and Penguin Books Ltd and that your thesis is in no way to be used for commercial purposes.

Given the fact that you wish to use this extract for academic purposes, we will not levy a fee on this occasion.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Valerie Duff

Valerie Duff

Watson, Little Limited

AUTHORS' AGENTS

12 Egbert Street
London NW1 8LJ

Tel: 071 722 9514
Fax: 071 586 7649

Directors:

Sheila Watson
Amanda Little

25 June 1991

[illegible]

Penguins [illegible]: KOALEN OF COLSEC:

Your enquiry of 11th to Penguin has been forwarded to me, via Collance, the [illegible] publisher, as we look after this author.

By all means reproduce the first page of this novel in your thesis - I am happy to grant you non-exclusive rights for this one use and there is, of course, no charge. I'd appreciate suitable acknowledgement not only to Puffin and Collance (the originating publisher) but to ourselves as the licensing agents.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Watson

Reg. No. 1002046 London Registered Office 83 Cambridge Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 4PS. VAT Reg. NO. 238 5723 44
Although every care is taken of MSS while in our possession we can accept no responsibility for loss or damage therto.

4923 - 126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6H 3W1
July 7, 1991

Bantam Books
666 Fifth Avenue
New York Nv 10103

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a master's student writing a thesis on adolescent reading, and I am writing to ask for your permission to reproduce a single page each from two titles published by you. The books are Keeping Secrets, a book about the Sweet Valley Twins written by Jamie Suzanne and created by Francine Pascal, and Practice Makes Perfect, a Sweet Dreams book by Jahnna Beecham, both published by you in 1988.

In each case, I would like permission to insert a copy of the first page of the main text into my thesis. This thesis is being written for the Faculty of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta.

I have already written about this to Cloverdale Press but the letter was returned to me unopened which has delayed my writing to you. I am sure you will appreciate that I am working to a deadline. I was hoping to have the copyrights cleared by August 15th, 1991 but I realize that this leaves only a short time for you to reply. If I do not hear from you by the end of August, I will assume that you have no objection and will add the two pages to the appendix of my thesis. Of course, appropriate acknowledgement will be made.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Mackey

BANTAM DOUBLEDAY DELL
PUBLISHING GROUP INC.

August 13, 1991

Margaret Mackey
4923-126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta CANADA T6H 3W1

Dear Ms. Mackey:

We have no objection to your use of the above material in your dissertation, as requested in your letter, subject to the following conditions:

1. Such material must be reproduced exactly as it appears in our publication;

2. Full acknowledgment of the title, author, copyright and publisher is given;

3. If you ever have your dissertation published, you must reapply for permission.

Best wishes for the success of your paper.

Yours sincerely,

Sincerely,

Angela T. Colangelo
Permissions Editor

666 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10103 • TEL (212) 765-6500 • TELEX 237992 or 277248 • CABLES: BANTAMBOOK NEW YORK • FAX (212) 765-3869

With Compliments

Please note that rights in THE CHANGEOVER are controlled by us – not Methuen.

Jean Richardson, Permissions

J M Dent & Sons Ltd Publishers

Registered office
91 Clapham High Street
London SW4 7TA

Telephone 01 622 9933
Fax: 627 3361
Telegrams and cables
Nicobar London SW4 7TA

Telex 918066

4923 - 126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6H 3W1
June 11, 1991

Methuen Children's Books Ltd.
11 New Fetter Lane
London EC4P 4EE

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a master's student writing a thesis on adolescent reading, and I am writing to ask for your permission to reproduce a single page from a book published by you in 1985: The Changeover: A Supernatural Romance by Margaret Mahy.

I would like permission to insert a copy of the first page of the main text into my thesis. This thesis is being written for the Faculty of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta.

I am sure you will appreciate that I am working to a deadline and I need to have a reply before August 15th, 1991. If I do not hear from you by that time, I will assume that you have no objection and will add the page to the appendix of my thesis. Of course, appropriate acknowledgement will be made.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Mackey

Margaret Mackey

THANK YOU FOR YOUR REQUEST OF 11.6.91
PERMISSION IS GRANTED SUBJECT TO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO AUTHOR/S, TITLE OF BOOK, & J. M. DENT AS PUBLISHERS.

PENGUIN USA

375 HUDSON STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10014-3657 TELEPHONE: 212-366-2000 FAX: 212-366-2666

September 05, 1991

Ms. Margaret Mackey
4923-126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6H 3W1

Dear Ms. Mackey:

We have no objection to your use of the above material in your dissertation, as requested in your letter, subject to the following conditions:

1. Such material must be reproduced exactly as it appears in our publication;

2. Full acknowledgment of the title, author, copyright and publisher is given;

3. If you ever have your dissertation published, you must reapply for permission.

Best wishes for the success of your paper.

Yours sincerely,

Sincerely,

Michael Schaeffer
Permissions Associate

RECEIVED

JUN 2 6 1991

PERMISSIONS

4923 - 126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6H 3W1
June 15, 1991

NAL Penguin Inc.
1633 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a master's student writing a thesis on adolescent reading, and I am writing to ask for your permission to reproduce a single page from a book published by you in 1988: The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger by Stephen King.

I would like permission to insert a copy of the first page of the main text into my thesis. This thesis is being written for the Faculty of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta.

I am sure you will appreciate that I am working to a deadline and I need to have a reply before August 15th, 1991. If I do not hear from you by that time, I will assume that you have no objection and will add the page to the appendix of my thesis.* Of course, appropriate acknowledgement will be made.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Mackey

Margaret Mackey

*Silence does not constitute consent.

consent pend
BLYTON

Hodder & Stoughton Limited

PERMISSION IS GRANTED FREE OF CHARGE, FOR THIS USE ONLY, SUBJECT TO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO AUTHOR, TITLE AND OURSELVES AS PUBLISHERS.

Mill Road
Dunton Green
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 2YA
Telephone: 0732 450111
Cables: Expositor Sevenoaks
Telex: 95122
FAX 0732 460134

Thank you for your recent request to use material from one of our books. Unfortunately we do not have all the information we need to be able to deal with your aplication. We are therefore returning your request and will be grateful if you will please complete the details below. Please send this form to the Permissions Department at the above address when completed; we will contact you again as soon as possible after we receive the information.

~~PERMISSION IS GRANTED~~ SUBJECT TO THE ATTACHED CONDITIONS. No. NP 13991

For and on behalf of HODDER & STOUGHTON LTD./NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY LTD

Permissions Department — Date 13/7/91

Your name MARGARET MACKEY

Your address 4923 - 126 STREET
EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA T6H 3W1

Your daytime telephone number 0101 - 403 - 436 - 6268

Title of our book FIVE RUN AWAY TOGETHER

Author(s) of our book ENID BLYTON

Publisher Hodder and Stoughton*/New English Library*/Coronet*/Sceptre*/Knight*/Diadem*/Hodder and Stoughton Educational*/Edward Arnold*/Headway*/Teach Yourself*/Charles Griffin/Other* (please specify)

Details of the material which you would like to use PHOTOCOPY OF PAGE 7 (THE FIRST PAGE OF CHAPTER ONE)

Prose extract Number of words in extract: 218 WORDS
This is/is not* a complete chapter or a complete short story.

Poetry extract Number of lines in Extract:
From the poem by
This extract is*/is not* a complete poem.

Illustrations Number of illustrations to be reproduced: —
Illustrations(s) by (illustrator's name)
from page(s)
captioned

for reproduction in colour*/black and white*
on the jacket or cover of the book*/inside the book*/specified below
for reproduction as a double-page spread*/full page*/half page*/quarter page or less* in the book specified below.

FOR USE IN A MASTER'S THESIS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA (SEE LETTER ATTACHED)

For use only in a trade hardback*/trade paperback*/mass-market paperback*/text book* to be entitled

by

which will be an anthology*/an original text containing a small proportion of quoted material*/other (please specify)*
to be published by tentative price:
proposed publication date: N/A
approximate first print run:
anticipated length ✓ words, or pages
for sale throughout the World*/UK and Commonwealth*/USA and Philippines*/other (please specify)*
in the language indicated: English*/other (please specify)*

*please delete inappropriate words

Registered Office:
Mill Road
Dunton Green,
Sevenoaks,
Kent
Company No: 651692 England

Sharon Joy

4923 - 126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6H 3W1
June 11, 1991

Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.
Mill Road
Dunton Green
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2YA.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a master's student writing a thesis on adolescent reading, and I am writing to ask for your permission to reproduce a single page from a book published by you in 1967 and in its twenty-eighth impression by 1987: Five Run Away Together by Enid Blyton.

I would like permission to insert a copy of the first page of the main text into my thesis. This thesis is being written for the Faculty of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta.

I am sure you will appreciate that I am working to a deadline and I need to have a reply before August 15th, 1991. If I do not hear from you by that time, I will assume that you have no objection and will add the page to the appendix of my thesis. Of course, appropriate acknowledgement will be made.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Mackey

Margaret Mackey

Hodder & Stoughton Limited

Mill Road
Dunton Green
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 2YA
Telephone 0732 450111
Cables: Expositor Sevenoaks
Telex 95122
FAX 0732 460134

PERMISSION NUMBER NP/ 13991

CONDITIONS

The permission requested in the attached application is granted free of charge only on the following conditions and your use of our material will indicate your acceptance of these conditions.

1. This permission is not valid unless your original application (or a copy of it), bearing our authorisation stamp and the above permission number, is attached to these conditions.

2. This permission is for non-exclusive use of ..218 WORDS ONLY..... once only in the English language, from our book the title of which is specified in your application.

3. The maximum extent of the territories in which this permission can be exercised is as indicated by our tick below:

( ) UK and Irish Republic
( ) British Commonwealth including/excluding Canada N/A
( ) World
( ) .....

For USA/Canadian rights please apply to

4. Your publication in which our material may be used is as specified in your application and is to be non-commercial and not to be sold for profit.

5. This permission is valid for one year from the date indicated on our authorisation stamp, after which it will lapse.

6. No alterations whatsoever to the material as published by us may be made without our prior written approval. The material will not be used in any context or in any way which will distort or alter the author's (or, if appropriate, illustrator's) original intention and meaning.

7. You will reproduce the following prominently with our material:
(i) acknowledgements to the title and author (and, if appropriate, illustrator) of our book from which the material has been taken
(ii) the copyright notice* in the exact form in which it appears in our book
(iii) the words "Reproduced by permission" followed by the name of the publisher as it appears in the stamped authorisation on the attached application.

8. Copyright matter by anybody other than the author (or, if appropriate, the illustrator) included in our material is not covered by this permission. Consent to use such copyright matter must be sought from the copyright owner concerned.

9. If we ask you to do so, you will supply us without charge with one finished copy of your publication containing our material for each author and/or illustrator concerned.

If you cannot comply with one or more of these conditions this permission is invalid. However, please contact the Permissions Department at the above address with details; we may be able to grant permission on an alternative basis.

*The copyright notice is normally (though not always) found on the reverse of a book's title-page. It generally includes the word " "Copyright", the symbol (c), the name of the copyright owner and the year of first publication.

Registered Office
Mill Road
Dunton Green
Sevenoaks
Kent
Company No. 675672 England

Cables: Authorlike London
84 Drayton Gardens
London SW10 9SD
(Reg. Office)
Telephone: 01-373 6642

The Society of Authors

A Company limited by shares
registered in England No. 19283

Miss Margaret Mackey,
4923 - 126 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta,
Canada T6H 3W1.

8 July 1991

Dear Miss Mackey,

Katherine Mansfield: SHORT STORIES

In answer to your letter of 28 June, the above are out of copyright everywhere except in the USA. If you want American distribution, you should write to Knopf of New York. Otherwise you are free to include THE DOLL'S HOUSE in your Master's thesis.

Yours sincerely,

Frances Hickson

Mrs. Frances Hickson

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: MARGARET MACKEY

TITLE OF THESIS: THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN READING STRATEGIES AND READING HISTORIES OF ADOLESCENTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

DEGREE: MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1991

PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY TO REPRODUCE SINGLE COPIES OF THIS THESIS AND TO LEND OR SELL SUCH COPIES FOR PRIVATE, SCHOLARLY OR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.

THE AUTHOR RESERVES OTHER PUBLICATION RIGHTS, AND NEITHER THE THESIS NOR EXTENSIVE EXTRACTS FROM IT MAY BE PRINTED OR OTHERWISE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE AUTHOR'S WRITTEN PERMISSION.

Margaret Mackey

4923 - 126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 3W1

Date: September 24, 1991

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT THEY HAVE READ AND RECOMMEND TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE A THESIS

ENTITLED: THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN READING STRATEGIES AND READING HISTORIES OF ADOLESCENTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

SUBMITTED BY: MARGARET MACKEY

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

A E Altmann
Anna Altmann

A M Schrader
Alvin M. Schrader

M L Iveson
Margaret L. Iveson

Date: September 20, 1991

Many people helped with this study, but three in particular deserve special thanks: Sarah, Beth and Terry.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the association between how people read a particular fictional text and their own individual reading histories. The starting point of this work is the assumption that probing a single reading of a single text can give only a very partial picture of a reader at work, that the reader's background creates a crucial element in the reading process. The study was designed to investigate methods by which insight into a reader's behaviour can be increased, and also to expand theoretical awareness of reading development.

Ten Grade 11 students were asked to read two particular short stories and to interrupt their readings at specified times to comment on how they perceived the development of the story. Four of these readers, chosen because of their divergent approaches to the stories, were selected for follow-up work. These four students were interviewed about their reading histories and asked to comment on eighteen first pages of novels written for children, adolescents and adults.

The material gathered from the ten readings of the two short stories provided many interesting details that contributed to a picture of readers engaged in processing text. However, when the further information about the four selected readers was added, the quality, range and subtlety of that picture was enormously enhanced. Some truisms about the development of adolescent readers were challenged by the reading histories of these four teenagers, who were idiosyncratic, sometimes contradictory, and always complex.

The number of readers studied was very small, but one purpose of this project was to establish ways of observing the reading process in action, always a difficult and delicate operation, given the invisible nature of most reading activity. The methodology chosen for this research allowed for a multi-pronged investigation and produced many useful insights. Its effectiveness in a wider study should be considerable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the following for permission to reproduce copyright material.

Scott Meredith for "Impostor" by Philip K. Dick.

J.M. Dent for The Changeover: A Supernatural Romance by Margaret Mahy.

Bantam Books for Keeping Secrets by Jamie Suzanne, copyright (c) 1987 by Francine Pascal.

Bantam Books for Practice Makes Perfect by Jahnna Beecham, copyright (c) 1988 by Cloverdale Press.

Victor Gollancz and Penguin Books, publishers, and Watson, Little Limited, agents, for Exiles of Colsec by Douglas Hill. Copyright (c) Douglas Hill, 1984.

Jonathan Cape and Penguin Books for Matilda by Roald Dahl.

Penguin USA for The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger by Stephen King, illustrated by Michael Whelan. Copyright (c) 1982 by Stephen King, illustrations copyright (c) 1982 by Michael Whelan. Published by New American Library.

Five Run Away Together by Enid Blyton. Copyright (c) Darrell Waters Ltd. Reproduced by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd./New English Library Ltd.

A separate and different acknowledgement must be made to the students and teachers of the participating high school. Obviously this thesis would not have been possible without their substantial contribution. This was willingly given, even though time pressures late in the school year were considerable. All the interviews were conducted in a spirit of cooperation and good will which made them not only extremely interesting but also very enjoyable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter 2
A SINGLE READING OF A SINGLE TEXT: WHAT IS HAPPENING? 4

Chapter 3
READERS WITH PASTS AND FUTURES 13

Chapter 4
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY 19

Chapter 5
SIX READINGS 28
Charlotte 28
Tracy 30
Tasha 31
Hannah 33
Cassie 35
Aduku 37

Chapter 6
FOUR READINGS - AND FOUR READERS 40
Jenny 40
Carl 52
Linda 63
Derek 72

Chapter 7
READING THE READINGS 83

Chapter 8
LOOKING AT THE READERS 90

Chapter 9
CONCLUSIONS 96

WORKS CITED 108

WORKS CONSULTED 110

Appendix 1
PERMISSION FORMS 113

Appendix 2
THE SHORT STORIES 118

Appendix 3
THE PAGE ONES 153

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1
NATURE OF MONITORING PROCESS 14

Table 2
FACTORS AFFECTING READING PROCESS 15

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex intellectual, affective and social activity. It cannot happen without both a content and a context. What is being read, why and where it is being read, and by whom, must be taken into consideration in any comprehensive account of a reading activity. Any description which leaves out one of those factors is necessarily partial; and any investigation of reading in process probably creates an artificiality in at least one of those ingredients.

Furthermore, reading cannot be monitored solely by outside observation because most of what is happening is invisible; but it cannot be explained solely by theoretical description either because each reader is different and so is each individual reading. In addition, to gain even a limited access to one individual reading, it is necessary to make some provision for the reader to reproduce that reading in a public way, and this activity in itself alters the nature and purpose of the reading. Perhaps it is not surprising that E.B. Huey said in 1908,

> . . . to completely analyze what we do when we read would almost be the acme of a psychologist's dream for it would be to describe very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind as well as to unravel the tangled story of the most remarkable specific performance that civilization has learned in all its history. (quoted in Anderson and Pearson, 255)

It is natural to think of a reading as a single event. But all reading takes time. Every reading experience happens over time. Even a single word slogan takes a fraction of a second to register and anything more complicated requires a correspondingly greater time frame. This seems obvious to the point of platitude, but it is a matter of great significance to the study of the reading process. With a text of more than one or two words, the reader is never reading the whole of that text at once.

Furthermore, the time actually involved in the reading itself is not the only time that must be taken into account in a truly comprehensive study of reading. All the reader's past experiences, of text and of life, to some extent are called into play in any single reading. A reading makes sense because of what the reader brings to it, which incorporates that reader's past. A reading also lingers in a reader's mind to contribute to the next reading or to be

pondered over and reflected on; thus it becomes part of that reader's future. A reading, therefore, not only involves duration; it also has its own past and future.

Any study, therefore, that purports to investigate some of the complexity of reading, should take account of the context of the reading, the content of the reading, and the time involved, in the actual reading itself, as well as in the creation of the reader who comes to the text. An awareness that the reading under investigation will feed into the reader's future should not be left out. Not surprisingly, there are not many studies which incorporate all of these ingredients, many of which are nebulous and many more of which are individual and idiosyncratic. Generalisations illuminate but also distort; theory provides only a partial insight. Although we need more than an accumulation of singular stories, we must acknowledge that any common understanding is produced by way of innumerable individual prisms.

This study attempts to examine a small number of individual teenaged readers and to investigate whether any association can be traced between their reading biographies and a common reading task, namely two pre-selected short stories. The specific research question was phrased as follows:

What is the association between prior reading experience and the reading strategies of adolescents as they read two specific short stories?

The material gathered in the attempt to answer that question forms the present work. This study attempts to present a systematic accumulation of layers of complexity in the description of the reading process. To keep some control over the potential for infinite expansion, the report follows a reiterative pattern: first an exploration of aspects of a single, particular reading; and then a look at how the introduction of the reader's background and history further complicates such an exploration.

Thus, Chapter 2 outlines some theories of reading which take into account the duration of the actual reading period, and which make allowance for individual deviations from the way of the ideal reader. Chapter 3 goes on to look at how readers develop, and how their particular experiences feed into a reading experience; and at how studies of such matters can contribute to our understanding of how readers accumulate insight into the way that reading works.

Chapter 4 breaks from the pattern to lay out the methodology which was used to develop this study in two directions: the investigation of the reading behaviour of ten 16 and 17 year old readers, and the further exploration of the reading backgrounds of four of them.

Chapter 5 contributes details of the six readings which were not followed up. Chapter 6 outlines the enormous increase in complexity which evolved from the study of the four readings which were followed up with interviews and work with extracts.

Chapter 7 attempts to analyze the wealth of data arising from the ten readings, and Chapter 8 explores the evolution of our understanding of the four readers whose background was investigated.

Finally, Chapter 9 takes a further look at the implications of investigating readers by way of a long-term temporal perspective and sums up the conclusions reached as a result of this study.

This is a small-scale investigation, and no general conclusions can be drawn from its findings. What even such a modest work can do, however, is challenge the simplicities of some of our thinking about readers.

This project set out to investigate whether a more comprehensive account of a reader's background would illuminate our understanding of that reader's reading. The structure of this account of the research is just one example of the finding that as we pay more attention to the realities of a single reader, our understanding becomes more complex.

Before turning to the results of the study, however, it will be helpful to look at some of the factors in operation when a reader meets a text.

Chapter 2

A SINGLE READING OF A SINGLE TEXT: WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The Text

Reading is a transaction between a particular text and an individual reader. Each establishes boundaries to what can occur in this transaction. The text, of course, is the easier to study of the pair because it stays put and can be turned to at will. There are many studies of single texts and what they can offer; but literary theorists have begun to look at a more generative theory of reading. Jonathan Culler has drawn an instructive comparison with linguistic theory:

> Study of the linguistic system becomes theoretically coherent when we cease thinking that our goal is to specify the properties of objects in a corpus and concentrate instead on the task of formulating the internalized competence which enables objects to have the properties they do for those who have mastered the system. To discover and characterize structures one must analyze the system which assigns structural descriptions to the objects in question, and thus a literary taxonomy should be grounded on a theory of reading. The relevant categories are those which are required to account for the range of acceptable meanings which works can have for readers of literature. (1975, 120)

Culler talked about ways of looking at texts to establish how they create boundary conditions to a reading. He did acknowledge that readers may play havoc with the rules:

> Performance may not be a direct reflection of competence, for behaviour can be influenced by a host of irrelevant factors: I may not have been paying attention at a given moment, may have been led astray by purely personal associations, may have forgotten something important from an earlier part of the text, may have made what I would recognize as a mistake if it were pointed out to me. . . . The question is not what actual readers happen to do but what an ideal reader must know implicitly in order to read and interpret works in ways which we consider acceptable, in accordance with the institution of literature. (1975, 123 - 124)

What is striking about Culler's work, in spite of this nod to the behaviour of individual readers, is that his governing metaphors and his approach to the text are spatial rather than temporal. A structure is created in space, rather than in time. Culler is not alone in this bias. Barthes, in S/Z, created an elaborate and illuminating set of codes, but they tend to show how parts of the text relate to each other; how they sit in juxtaposition in the story. There is an acknowledgement that questions are raised at one time to be answered or deferred at another, but the main effect of Barthes' analysis of Sarrasine is to

draw attention to an elaborate network of relationships between elements in the text. The ingredients are in place in the story and the reader perceives the arrangement.

Structure, position, network, arrangement, place - all these are spatial metaphors, and distort our perception of duration. If we look for narrative theory that takes account of reading time, we acquire a different kind of perception of the process. Culler himself began to move in this direction with his essay, "Prolegomena to a Theory of Reading":

> Just as sequences of sound have meaning only in relation to the grammar of a language, so literary works may be quite baffling to those with no knowledge of the special conventions of literary discourse, no knowledge of literature as an institution. To account for the form and meaning of literary works is to make explicit the special conventions and procedures of interpretation that enable readers to move from the linguistic meaning of sentences to the literary meanings of works. To explain facts about the form and meaning works have for readers is to construct hypotheses about the conditions of meaning, and hypotheses about the conditions of meaning are claims about the conventions and interpretive operations applied in reading. (1980, 49)

Readers "move" in this passage, a verb with temporal as well as spatial potential.

Wolfgang Iser looked in detail at how texts make meaning only when somebody reads them, and he paid considerable attention to the element of time in the reading process:

> [O]ur first problem is the fact that the whole text can never be perceived at any one time. In this respect it differs from given objects, which can generally be viewed or at least conceived as a whole. The "object" of the text can only be imagined by way of different consecutive phases of reading. We always stand outside the given object, whereas we are situated inside the literary text. The relation between text and reader is therefore quite different from that between object and observer: instead of a subject-object relationship, there is a moving viewpoint which travels along inside that which it has to apprehend. This mode of grasping an object is unique to literature. . . . Apperception can only take place in phases, each of which contains aspects of the object to be constituted, but none of which can claim to be representative of it. Thus the aesthetic object cannot be identified with any of its manifestations during the time-flow of the reading. The incompleteness of each manifestation necessitates syntheses, which in turn bring about the transfer of the text to the reader's consciousness. The synthesizing process, however, is not sporadic - it continues throughout every phase of the journey of the wandering viewpoint. (108 - 109)

A book by Peter J. Rabinowitz is probably the most detailed review of how a text, over a period of time, activates a set of conventions in order to engage its reader. Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation made an important contribution to this research project and it is worth outlining its approach in some detail.

Rabinowitz stressed the role of the reader's prior information and access to the codes of reading. He emphasized the ways authors use conventions to define their expectations of readers.

Rabinowitz described in detail the workings of four major sets of rules which readers apply as they read fiction. These are: (a) rules of notice; (b) rules of signification; (c) rules of configuration; and (d) rules of coherence.

(a) Rules of notice. These help readers to establish which characters are important and which are minor; which details of plot are significant and which need only passing attention. They can be very simple, such as using titles, typography, paragraphing; they can include more complex ideas such as the extra weighting given to the first or last sentence in a unit. Interruptions and deviations also attract notice, and Rabinowitz makes a comment that could stand as a motto for this research: "Different norms characterize different sets of narratives; what stands out as deviant, therefore, depends not only on social context but also on the intertextual grid against which the text is read" (70).

(b) Rules of signification. These assist in the allotment of import to particular ideas in a text. We need to establish the source of particular sentences: author, narrator, character. We need to make ethical judgements about characters or situations. We need to work out the relationship of the particular fictional world to the real world. We need to establish causes and effects. The author makes use of conventional cues to enable us to do this, which does not imply that a fictional text need be "conventional" in the other sense of the word.

(c) Rules of configuration. These are used to help the reader fit the story together. They are the conventions which activate expectations - if certain elements appear in a certain kind of story, readers expect certain outcomes. Even if these expectations are confounded, they play a role in the reading of the text, and Rabinowitz suggested that "if too many of these activated expectations are ignored, readers may find the results dull or chaotic" (113).

Rules of configuration can be highly genre specific, but Rabinowitz outlined what he called two metarules of configuration: "First, it is appropriate to expect that something will happen. Second, it is appropriate to expect that not anything can happen" (117).

(d) Rules of coherence. These are applied retrospectively, as the reader approaches the end of the text and attempts to make sense of it as a whole. "We assume, to begin with, that the work is coherent and that apparent flaws in its construction are intentional and

meaning bearing" (147). We must come to terms with what has been left out. No text tells us everything and we must decide whether omitted events or thoughts are important or not. We must also deal with surplus information - repetition or emphasis on something which seems irrelevant. In general, in Western fiction, we "are intended to assume that the surplus is intentional and that we are supposed to interpret it in one way or another, transforming the text so that it is no longer excessive" (154).

Rules of coherence also involve the interpretation of patterns - both within the text and in the relationship of the text to other texts. They also involve coming to terms with the conclusion, whether or not it invokes closure.

This very brief overview of Rabinowitz's complex analysis gives some indication of how his rules can aid in the interpretation of a reader's strategies, which will be an important part of the methodology of this project.

Rabinowitz confined himself to theoretical conclusions; he made no attempt to observe other readers applying his rules to a text. Culler briefly outlined ways in which real readers can deviate from the ideal reading. Other theorists and researchers have explored this aspect of reading in more depth.

The Reader

The writer designs the text so that the reader can proceed through it over time, gathering ideas, drawing conclusions, making predictions and so forth. The real reader may behave in unpredictable ways, however; and a number of people have looked at how and why readers may bring their own interpretations to bear. Others have investigated different aspects of readers' behaviour and commented on how such behaviour can impinge on the transaction with the text.

There is not room to go into detail about all the many varied studies of reading which could contribute to our understanding. At this point, it must suffice to look at the contributions of a few theorists and researchers who have given particularly helpful insights into some of the things that are going on as the text is being read.

James R. Squire looked at the reading behaviour of a group of students and reported in 1964 in The Responses of Adolescents while Reading Four Short Stories. Squire gave segmented copies of four stories to 52 ninth and tenth grade students and recorded their oral responses at the end of each segment. Participants were asked

to respond freely and completely in describing the "feelings, ideas, opinions, or reactions" which occurred to them while reading or at the end of reading each story. (16)

Content analysis was used to categorize the responses. Seven general categories were established: literary judgments, interpretational responses, narrational reactions (that is, straight retellings), associational responses, self-involvement, prescriptive judgments, and miscellaneous.

Squire's report is full of interesting details but it is possible here to outline only his main conclusions. This is a highly edited list of his comments on the analysis of the data. Even in this brief extract it is possible to begin to see the complexity that develops when real readers come into the picture:

> a. Narrational and associational responses remain relatively constant for all six divisions, with the percentage scores exceedingly small. . . . [R]eaders associate elements in the story with their own experience or judge behavior of characters at any moment during the reading of a story, rather than only at the end of reading.
>
> b. The dominant response is the interpretational one. . . . [I]t suggests that many young readers seek to understand the motivations of characters and the forces underlying plot and incident.
>
> c. For both boys and girls, the percentage of literary judgments appears to be comparatively high in responses to the first divisions of the stories but falls off sharply in reactions to the subsequent divisions. . . . Clearly the readers of both sexes tend to judge stories in terms of literary values to a greater extent when they commence reading or complete reading than they do as they become engrossed in the central experiences depicted in the literature.
>
> d. Paralleling the pattern for literary judgment is the development of self-involvement reactions. These occur less frequently in reactions to the first division than to subsequent divisions. . . . [N]ot until after the exposition of a story is read and considered do the percentages of responses indicating emotional involvement tend to increase.
>
> e. Possible covariation of literary judgments and self-involvement responses is suggested by certain shifts in the kinds of responses. When involved, as during the reading of the central portions of these stories, the subjects made fewer literary judgments. . . . These two types of responses seem to reinforce one another, with readers who are emotionally involved formulating more literary judgments even though the responses occur at different times. . . .
>
> A separate examination of the patterns of response to each of the four selections revealed patterns which resembled closely the overall tendencies discussed earlier. However, unusual reactions to a particular division of a story occasionally

indicated the special influences of the content. The complete and detailed analysis of these tendencies illustrates the complexity of the reading patterns. (30 - 33)

Squire made a useful summary of what seemed to cause errors of interpretation among his readers.

> A study of the transcripts reveals six sources of difficulty to be particularly widespread among these 52 adolescent readers: the reader fails to grasp the most obvious meanings of the author; the reader relies on stock responses when faced with a seemingly familiar situation; the reader is "happiness bound"; the reader approaches literature with certain critical predispositions; the reader is sidetracked by irrelevant associations; and the reader is determined to achieve certainty in interpretation and is unwilling to hold judgment in abeyance. Other causes of difficulty occur, but these are the most common. (37)

Geoffrey Thornton, in a review of the mass of material gathered by Britain's Assessment of Performance Unit (APU), made some telling remarks about how readers may or may not retrieve the situation when they begin to misinterpret what the text has to say. He was discussing the APU survey of eleven-year-old readers and some of the problems they encountered while reading; thus he refers to high and low scorers rather than good and poor reader because he was talking about responses to a particular task set by the APU. However, his comments apply to less structured reading contexts as well.

> Difficulties arise from the mismatch between the child's preconceptions of what the text requires and the nature of the text itself, and, if they have no strategies for closing the gap, those difficulties will not be overcome. . . . Low scorers often based their responses not on the text in front of them but on some personal knowledge which they allowed to influence their approach. They exhibited a reluctance to modify their initial perceptions, to such an extent that any interpretation incompatible with those perceptions was virtually excluded. High scorers, on the other hand, showed themselves willing to adapt initial assumptions to take account of new information in the text. Low scorers also demonstrated an inability to pick out relevant clues from the text, other than a key word which might lead to a correct answer. They relied on invention rather than deduction, or the provision of an inappropriate quotation rather than an inference. High scorers showed greater versatility, and were more successful at selecting and re-ordering relevant facts from a text into a synthesis of their own. They were more willing and more able to interrogate the text in order to get at the meaning. (40)

Another factor, often overlooked because it is so far removed from the behaviour of the ideal reader, is the simple component of either not noticing or forgetting. No matter how carefully the writer places and highlights a crucial detail which will turn out to be essential to the overall pattern of the story, there will always be a reader who overlooks it. One kind of response to this contingency is the reader who is able to produce a kind of

"virtual" reading: I didn't notice/don't remember that this was mentioned but it clearly must have been so I will proceed as if I had registered it in the first place. Re-reading is another strategy which can solve this problem. A possible response is to distort the rest of the text to make sense of the omission. Another, of course, is simply to record incoherence and defeat. Not every reading, no matter how much time it takes, is successful or satisfying in the end.

Questions of taste and empathy also affect any person's reading. A reader may sympathise with a particular character, prefer a particular genre, respond to a particular tone of narrative voice. These factors are ultimately decided by the reader, no matter how much the writer tries to control the reader's relationship to the text.

Jack Thomson, looking at adolescent readers, drew up a developmental scheme which builds in empathising and analogising with the reader's own life as part of the early development of a reader. However, readers can certainly read without engaging in such linkage to themselves, although enjoyment may be affected. Robert Protherough, in his account of the development of readers, talked about degrees of distance between the reader and the story as one way of organizing our perceptions of the reading experience.

> In distinguishing between the accounts of different children, the key factor is the amount of distance between the reader and the people and events of the story. At one extreme is the sense of total immersion,of being "lost", "wrapped up in", "carried away by" the story. At the other extreme is the relative detachment, promoted in examination forms, which we call loosely "critical reading". (21)

Protherough suggested that analyzing responses of children leads to a list of five major ways in which these children see the process of reading fiction. These are as follows: projection into a character, projection into the situation, associating between book and reader, the distanced viewer, detached evaluation (21 - 24).

> These five can be arranged on such a scale of "increasing distance", without suggesting that the fifth mode is necessarily "better" than the first. . . . [T]here is no neat correlation between age and stage. . . . What does seem to be associated with maturity in reading is the ability to operate in an increasing number of modes, according to the work being read and the mood or needs of the moment, rather than assuming that there is only one way of reading. (21)

In the process of discussing empathy and investigating the development of readers, both Thomson and Protherough also considered the other side of the coin, the issue of detachment, critical alertness, and awareness of the story as a construct designed by an

author to create certain reactions. This is a different mental approach, which can be activated during the reading of a text.

Consideration should also be given to the issue of suspending not merely disbelief, but also conclusion. Squire refers briefly to the reader who feels a need to leap to certainty, and this tendency can drastically affect a reading. A reader moves in the text, looking forward and backward, making judgements, predicting, reassessing what was thought before. Some readers are eager to arrive at a sense of the outcome, even if it has to be changed throughout the reading; others are more ready to hold closure in abeyance, to give equal consideration to different options, to live with uncertainty. Margaret Meek, in her discerning booklet on transactions between beginning readers and their books, observes,

> Those who know that authors help them to make sense of the story are more patient with the beginnings of books than those who expect to recognize straightaway what they have to understand. The common phrase for this process is "getting into the story". Practised readers tolerate uncertainty; they know that sometimes the author is building up suspense and that the puzzle will be resolved if they just keep reading. I wish I knew more about how we learn to tolerate uncertainty in our reading and what we are really doing. (1988, 31)

Kay Vandergrift makes a tantalising reference to another version of this kind of difference in strategy when she refers to a

> continuum of responses . . . between readers who tried to get an early "fix" on the story and anticipate its outcome (Classificatory) and those who, in the words of one student, "go with the flow" (Personal). In both written and oral responses, some participants seemed to need to classify a text very early in their reading and then interpret and evaluate the text according to that classification ("This must be science fiction." "I'll bet Jimmy is an alien."). One factor which seems to be related to these modes of response is the type of fiction respondents prefer in reading for pleasure. Those who prefer "genre" fiction (mystery, science fiction, romance) appear to be more likely to keep a greater aesthetic distance from a literary work and concentrate more on form than on feeling. Those who select primarily realistic teenage fiction for their personal reading are more likely to identify with the protagonist and "live through" the text. (133)

Claudia Mitchell, in her Ph.D. dissertation, An Ethnographic Study of the Metacognitive Functioning of Voracious Adult Readers of Fiction, also found readers with preferred and habitual modes of response:

> Readers who like details, images and descriptions in a text can either choose stories that have lots of detail in them, or then can focus more on the details of any story. Readers who like the bare bones of the story or take a more holistic approach can leave out the details and still retain the gist of the story. (187)

Another issue is what is missing: the gaps in the text. Even in a single reading of a single text, the enormous question of coming to terms with what is absent as well as what is present cannot be ignored. There are different kinds of gaps. Rabinowitz comments on the fact that no author can include everything, and outlines some strategies readers use to carry them over omissions, such as presuming continuity unless told otherwise. He also, however, quotes the irrepressible Ramona, who asks her teacher how Mike Milligan can go to the bathroom if he is working in a steam shovel all day. Miss Binney says it is left out because it is not important, but Ramona and her Kindergarten classmates know very well that going to the bathroom is very important indeed.

Readers and texts are always rooted in particular times, places, cultures and ideologies. What disappears in the gaps of any given narrative is often an ideological question. Even the etiquette which leads to the general omission of lavatorial explanations from standard fiction has ideological implications; so do more substantial gaps. Two examples may illustrate this issue. Raymond Williams commented on Jane Austen's work:

> Neighbours in Jane Austen are not the people actually living nearby; they are the people living a little less nearby who, in social recognition, can be visited. What she sees across the land is a network of propertied houses and families, and through the holes of this tightly drawn mesh most actual people are simply not seen. To be face-to-face in this world is already to belong to a class. No other community, in physical presence or in social reality, is by any means knowable. And it is not only most of the people who have disappeared. . . . It is also most of the country, which becomes real only as it relates to the houses which are the real nodes; for the rest the country is weather or a place for a walk. (166)

Catherine Belsey described a less clear-cut case, discussing the stories of Sherlock Holmes:

> [T]hese stories, whose overt project is total explicitness, total verisimilitude in the interests of a plea for scientificity, are haunted by shadowy, mysterious and often silent women. Their silence repeatedly conceals their sexuality, investing it with a dark and magical quality which is beyond the reach of scientific knowledge. (114)

Even at this level of considering a single reading of a single text, it is clear that an enormous network of intersecting forces is at work: textual conventions; readers' personal predilections, tastes, and need for rapid closure; the degree to which readers are flexible, careful, observant; levels of detachment; ideological assumptions of both readers and writers. When we then add the idea of including the reader's individual background in our investigation, even greater complexity becomes apparent.

Chapter 3

READERS WITH PASTS AND FUTURES

The previous chapter began to build up a picture of some of the layers of complexity involved in a single reading. Even by the end of the chapter, this account was still very abstract, dealing in possibilities and potentialities rather than the specific. Once we turn to the idea of discussing real readers we run into two problems: the question of how to observe that reading in practice, an issue alluded to in Chapter 1, and the question of what kind of baggage and equipment the reader has acquired over previous reading and life experience. To complicate the matter further, attempts to improve our understanding of one of these problems may not be compatible with clarifying the other.

There are many studies of readers reading. Researchers have tried many approaches to the problem of re-creation of the reading experience for any public audience: researcher, teacher, even another reader.

Rather than enumerating the many studies which attempt to elaborate different aspects of reading in process, a major summary and synthesis may be more useful. Research and theory about reading cover every stage from beginners to the most subtle and informed adult readers. Most relevant to this study was the work dealing with those readers who are past the stage of mastering the basics and are still developing. Of course, all readers may continue to develop, and in some cases, work with adults was relevant and useful. For the most part, however, the examination of the literature was confined to work with school students past the first stage of learning to read.

More than fifty recent books and articles were found to investigate some aspects of real readers reading real texts (that is, texts not created for research purposes). The attempt to summarize and synthesize these reports resulted in the creation of two long lists of factors involved in reading and in the monitoring of reading.

These lists were interesting in their own right, but re-arranged into two tables organized by the principle of time, they presented a useful and illuminating contrast to each other. Reading always involves a time scale, but it is not necessarily obvious how this may affect what is going on. These tables may help to create a new perspective on the way that the time element affects both the reading and the assessment of that reading.

The first table lays out different ways in which we may explore somebody else's reading. Developing "windows" on the reading process is an activity which may occur before, during, or after the actual reading time itself.

The table outlines the framework within which a monitoring procedure interacts with the act of reading:

TIME	NATURE OF MONITORING PROCESS
BEFORE READING	PREDICTING -"paracues" - hints from cover, etc. -previous recommendation -knowledge of author, series, etc.
DURING READING	READING ALOUD (to a limited extent) KEEPING A JOURNAL TALKING/WRITING AT INTERVALS WHILE READING -in a structured way -in some kind of think-aloud protocol GROUP DISCUSSION
AFTER READING	RE-TELLING THE STORY RE-WRITING THE STORY RETROSPECTIVE THINK-ALOUDS FURTHER WRITING -the next chapter -an alternative ending -a similar story RETROSPECTIVE, POSSIBLY CRITICAL, ESSAY RETROSPECTIVE ACCOUNT OF READING PROCESS DRAMATIC ENACTMENT OR RESPONSE GROUP DISCUSSION

Table 1

It is obvious from a quick glance at this table that it is easier to monitor reading during or after the event than to intervene before the reading takes place. This is self-evident, but it is not insignificant. By and large, we can only gain insight into a particular reading as or after it happens.

However, the reader who comes to the text is already largely "made" before the reading begins. The text directs the reader, but the way the reader reacts to that text is, to a large extent, based on previous experience with other texts and an already established understanding of life, society, human relationships and so forth.

An overview of those factors which affect the reader, laid out on a similar time grid, throws up a striking contrast with the first table.

TIME	FACTORS AFFECTING READING PROCESS
BEFORE READING	SOCIAL SETTING GENDER READER'S PERSONAL HISTORY READER'S SELF CONCEPT READER'S READING HISTORY -experience of genre -experience of particular author READER'S EXPERIENCE OF OTHER FICTIONS -oral -television -movies -comics -magazines READER'S IDEOLOGY READER'S DISCOURSE REPERTOIRE READER'S REASON FOR READING CHOICE OF TITLE
DURING READING	READER'S COMPETENCE READER'S DEGREE OF INTEREST AND/OR ALERTNESS DIFFICULTY OF TEXT -vocabulary -denseness -style READER'S EMPATHY WITH CHARACTERS GENRE INTERTEXTUAL REQUIREMENTS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS OF TEXT BEING READ IDEOLOGY OF TEXT MODE OF PRESENTATION -silent reading -reading aloud -being read to FIRST OR SUBSEQUENT READING OF TEXT COMMUNITY OF INTERPRETERS
AFTER READING	OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT/DISCUSS OPPORTUNITY TO RE-READ COMMUNITY OF INTERPRETERS

Table 2

The briefest of comparisons between the two tables highlights the substantial difference between the two approaches. To a limited extent, a reader's reading can be affected after the event, but many factors are already established before the reader even picks up the text, and most of the rest become important during the reading itself.

Thus a study which attempts to take account both of the reading process as it occurs and of the individual reader who participates in this process must find ways to incorporate that reader's individual past into the monitoring procedure. Merely investigating the reading itself will not include all necessary elements of the transaction. Nor will a simple reading history of a person take account of how a particular text may affect that reader, before, during, and after the reading event. A more comprehensive methodology, encompassing both the reader and the reading, needs to be developed.

Factors in Reading

Although the tables sum up a great deal of research in perhaps a deceptively tidy way, and certainly allow for further insight into the problems of opening windows on the reading process, they are necessarily dense, and it may be useful to expand on some of the material which contributed to their formation.

Methods of monitoring an individual reading experience abound. Some attempted to elucidate single aspects of the reading process, isolating understanding of dialogue conventions or psychological insight or social constructs. Some concentrated on aspects of genre, mode of telling (oral or written, for example), or register. Some, particularly James Squire who has already been mentioned, made a major attempt to account for a multitude of factors at work in the reading of a single text.

Others took a more analytical approach to the issue of reproducing the reading experience in a public version. Jerome Bruner and Daniel D. Hade both looked at linguistic links between an original story and its retelling and reflected on how these may shed light on the way we process stories. Judith A. Langer set up a huge study of children reading and writing, partly to look at alternative ways of monitoring such activity, partly to elicit an account of children's own awareness of what they were doing.

When it comes to looking at the reader and the context of the reading, complicating factors immediately proliferate. Again, some studies attempted to isolate particular issues. Tony Hincks and John W. Balding, for example, reported on the single question of the

relationship between television viewing time and book reading. At the other extreme, the wide-ranging anthropological work of Shirley Brice Heath looked at the amorphous and all-encompassing question of how small children learn to make stories in the specific context of their own immediate communities.

Maureen Sanders, investigating one young child becoming a reader, concentrated on the reading of a particular series, the Ramona books, and how this reading fed into the child's interpretation of her own community, and how that community joined her in interpretation. Donald Fry, taking a slightly larger group, talked to six children about books they like to read, why, what they make of them, what it says of them as readers. Claudia Mitchell and Charles Sarland, in different countries, wrote doctoral dissertations which attempted to enlist readers in the analysis of what affects them. Mitchell talked to adults, Sarland to adolescents, but both included a wide range of internal and external factors which played on the kinds of readers these individuals became. Victor Nell, in an even larger study, attempted to include the physiological aspects of pleasure in reading, as well as reporting on social and institutional ingredients.

A few researchers looked at the development of readers over time. Arthur Applebee investigated how children's capacity to report on a story altered as they matured. Robert Protherough and Jack Thomson both undertook much more detailed studies of how this process continues through adolescence.

There is some work on political, ideological and institutional pressures which affect reading. Some of these are specific to certain age ranges, like, for example, the constraints of any local examination system which particularly affect adolescents. The politics and economics of book supply and range of local choice are elements of reading which certain researchers have taken into account. A different kind of political and social impact is made by matters of gender, race and class.

A further source of social impact on personal response (and on the monitoring of that response) is the social and political decision made by readers about the range of discourses (or kinds of language) appropriate for discussion of reading in a particular setting; Elizabeth Frazer is illuminating on that point. Students may speak about books in a particular way within a school context, for example, but be able to switch out of that register at will. Mitchell also ran into discourse constraints when talking to her adult readers; they had long been conditioned to regard a lengthy description of a book just read or a program

just watched as socially inappropriate, and therefore summarized their reactions more drastically than the researcher desired.

This overview represents the most cursory skip through any major issues. A complete bibliography of the material which contributed to the creation of the two tables is appended, under the heading "Works Consulted." (See page 110.)

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The more we look at reading the more complicated and elaborate a process it appears to be. The challenge in setting up this study was to find some way of investigating real readers which would attempt to take account of as much of this complexity as possible without becoming totally unmanageable.

The first and obvious step was to decide on a very small number of readers. The number fixed upon was ten, with a smaller number to be chosen for follow-up work.

The second step was to establish a group of readers of a common age. Grade 11 students were chosen on the grounds that they would be close enough to their childhoods to be able to recall their earlier reading experience in some detail, while being old enough to generalise and reflect on their own reading behaviour.

The next task was to design a framework which would allow for as full a range of response as possible while allowing for coherent organization in the presentation of the data collected. Such a possibility began to fall into place when the virtues of the time format became apparent: the analysis of reading under the categories before, during and after showed promise for the research design as well as for the organization of previous work.

The formal outline of the research procedure is described below.

The Specific Research Problem

The research question for the present study is as follows:

What is the association between prior reading experience and the reading strategies of adolescents as they read two specific short stories?

Definitions

The key terms are: prior reading experience, and reading strategies.

Prior reading experience is defined as voluntary reading of any kind, previous to the date of the study, which impressed the reader sufficiently to be recalled in an interview concerning the individual's reading history, supplemented by reaction to extracts from different works of fiction.

Reading strategies is defined as the exercise of the following approaches to written fiction: assessment of the information provided in different stages of the story, prediction about how the story is likely to unfold, re-assessment of earlier observations and predictions, reflection on the story as a whole.

Data Collection

This study utilised a qualitative design.

The population for this study was students in English 20, the academic Grade 11 English course, at an Edmonton high school. Teachers were asked to choose ten students who appeared to have a range of reading interests.

These students were given two short stories to read silently in sections, followed by general questions. The answers were tape recorded and transcribed.

From the transcripts of the readings of these stories, four readers were selected on the basis of their contrasting approaches to the readings.

Further investigation of the reading histories of this smaller group followed, accompanied by participants' reactions to a selection of first pages from a range of novels (hereinafter referred to as the page ones).

The two stories, divided into segments, and the page ones appear in Appendices 2 and 3 at the end of this study, exactly as they were given to the students.

The study was designed to make use of the concept of triangulation which was borrowed from ethnographic research. The attempt to garner information about reading behaviour was three-pronged, with the reading, the follow-up interview and reactions to the page ones all supplementing each other.

The intention of this design was also to set up as many routes as possible to investigate the behaviour of readers before reading, during reading, and after reading. The route of entry into this process was to occur during reading, so the first procedure involved all ten students in the reading of two stories.

During Reading - the Stories

Two stories were chosen for this work.

One was "Impostor" by Philip K. Dick, a science fiction story about a man, Spence Olham, who may or may not be a robot programmed to resemble him in every way including

feelings and memories. If he is the robot he must be destroyed because he is also programmed to blow up at the utterance of a particular phrase. Olham is convinced he is still human and the story involves many twists and turns of plot as he attempts to evade the people who are out to kill him before he, as they think, can kill them. He asks his wife, Mary, to summon a doctor who can assess whether he is human or machine, but she is prevented from doing so. Just as it seems he has finally established his humanity, the key phrase is spoken and the robot Olham and his pursuers all explode.

The second story was "The Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield. It concerns a family of rich children who are given a beautiful furnished doll's house. It is complete even to the little lamp which particularly entrances Kezia, one of the little girls in the family. Children from the neighbourhood school are invited in turn to see it, but two sisters named Kelvey are not permitted to visit because their mother is a washerwoman and their father is rumoured to be in jail. Kezia finds this exclusion troubling and one day, when nobody is about, she invites the two Kelveys to see the doll's house just as all the other children have done. They are discovered and thrown out, but the younger Kelvey sister is content because she has at last seen the little lamp that everybody has been talking about.

These stories were selected for a number of reasons. They provide a considerable contrast to each other in many ways. One is by a man, one, by a woman. One is genre fiction, the other is not. One is set in the future, the other, in a past that was contemporary to the writer. One is American, one is British (Canadian stories were explicitly avoided on the grounds that students were more likely to have come across them before). One emphasizes twists of plot and surprises; the other concentrates on observation of a particular small community and its discords. In a way both could be described as having a surprise ending; "Impostor" pulls off one last change of direction in the plot, while "The Doll's House" surprises by its low-key conclusion, the lack of real change in the community.

These stories were handed out in segments, nine for "Impostor" and six for "The Doll's House." Participants were asked to comment on any expectations roused by each title and then were asked several questions at the end of each section. These were as follows:

1. *What do you think is worth noticing in this section?*
2. *What do you now expect from the rest of the story?*
3. *Have you any re-assessment to make of anything you thought earlier?*

At the end of each story, a fourth question was added:

4. What do you think of the story as a whole?

There are several ways of tapping into reading in progress. This approach does guide response to some extent, though the questions were as open-ended as possible. What this method does offer is a small-scale version of before, during and after. Question 1 assesses current reactions - "during." Question 2 raises the "before" issue of what readers think will happen in the future. Question 3 looks back on earlier reading and thus represents "after", as does Question 4. Students were thus constantly encouraged to look ahead and look back as well as reflect on what they were reading at the moment.

Responses to these stories were taped and transcribed. Four readers were then chosen for the second part of the work. This selection was made on the basis of differences in response. The plan was to find two fluent and flexible readers and two who appeared to be more limited in their approach to reading. Derek and Linda (all student names have been changed) read the stories with ease, confidently observing Rabinowitz's conventions and contributing examples of other kinds of insight as well. Carl was uneasy about "Impostor" and had trouble keeping track of all the ingredients of the plot, though he commented thoughtfully on "The Doll's House." Jenny, although she followed "The Doll's House" clearly enough, disliked it very much and displayed many signs of resistance to it. The hope was that these four with their disparate approaches would offer a range of background experiences.

The decision to interview these four was easy to make at one level, as all four of them appeared to have the potential to make many interesting observations. What was not so simple was the elimination of the other six. Ideally, the most interesting approach would have been to interview all ten, as each showed enough of a different approach to the reading task to make that an interesting prospect. However, constraints of time and manageability made that difficult. Therefore, the decision to talk further to the particular four who were chosen was really made on the assumption that further conversation with any of the ten would have been worthwhile. The specific points of interest in the readings of the four who were chosen for further work are included in Chapter six.

<u>After Reading - the Interviews</u>

The four selected readers were asked to produce an account of their own reading histories, guided by a number of questions. These questions were used as the first part of

an interview which covered past and present reading behaviour and tastes. Students were given a copy of these questions in advance of the session and asked to look through them. Three of them brought brief written notes to the interview; Derek said his notes were in his head.

These are the questions which were used as a starting point:

(a) Can you remember being read to as a young child? Can you remember any titles you particularly enjoyed or particularly disliked? What were they?

(b) What can you remember about learning to read?

(c) Can you remember any book titles that you particularly enjoyed or particularly disliked as a new reader?

(d) As you grew older, were there individual books or particular series that you liked? What were they?

(e) Where did you get your books from? Did you buy them, get them for presents, borrow them from friends, borrow them from the library? Is it the same now?

(f) Can you look back and see any stage at which your reading tastes changed? Can you describe these changes? What made you move on to different kinds of books? What were the kinds of books you began to like? Why?

(g) What sorts of books do you like now?

(h) How much time do you spend reading? Is it more or less than it was when you were younger? Why?

(i) Are there people with whom you talk about what you are reading and/or share books? Who?

(j) What is the most interesting book you have ever read? Why?

In addition, after the particulars of the individual history were gleaned, a number of different, more general questions were asked. These questions were drawn from previous work on reading, in particular from the developmental work of Protherough and Thomson (although question (a) owes a debt to Nancie Atwell and (b) to Claudia Mitchell). This set of questions attempted to draw out and illuminate the reader's sense of self-awareness. Unlike the first set, they were not provided beforehand.

(a) What makes a good reader?

(b) Why do you read?

(c) Where in the story are you when you read? Where in the story is the author?

(d) What makes you want to read more?

(e) What happens when you re-read?

(f) What happens when you finish reading a book you have really enjoyed?

(g) Do you think reading has helped you to understand more about yourself or other people? How?

The purpose of these two sets of questions, and the different discussions that arose from students' various responses was to establish as complete a picture as possible of the reader as perceived by him or herself. No attempt was made to verify or question any assertions made by a particular reader, and it is difficult to see how any such attempt could have been made. The work on the page ones (described below) did, however, provide a further point of insight into how the reader behaved and to some extent did provide corroboration for or cast doubt upon the reader's self-analysis.

Before Reading - the Page Ones

The readings provided a window on participants engaged with a particular text; the interviews provided them with a chance to discuss what they actually do like to read and why. It seemed desirable to find a way to observe some of their reading behaviour over a wider range of material, and it was early decided that a useful strategy would be to get them to comment on a number of extracts from fiction aimed at different age levels. It soon became apparent that there would be additional advantages in making all the extracts the first page of each book selected.

Participants were thus given a total of eighteen first pages, or "page ones," from books covering a wide age spectrum up to and including some adult titles. They were asked to say if they thought that at any time in their lives up to this point they would have been likely to want to read more of this particular book, and why.

This exercise accomplished a number of ends. Participants were reminded of books they had enjoyed in their childhood and their reading histories were thus enriched. Insight into their tastes was improved as they commented on what they liked and didn't like about particular page ones. What they had observed about their reading pasts was reinforced or drawn into question as they commented on this range of material. Most interesting of all was to observe them behaving as readers in a crucial activity: narrowing down an infinite range of possibilities into a considered assessment of what a text was likely to offer, all in the space of a few lines of reading.

Reading the first pages showed readers in a simulation of the kind of action they would engage in as they set up their expectations of a book. With the decontextualised photocopies, they had none of the clues which normally come with cover, blurb, recommendation and so forth, and so they had to rely solely on textual strategies. It was interesting to see that they all reached decisions with little difficulty. It was unusual for anyone to say he or she didn't know whether or not to read further, although occasionally a person said page 2 would assist the decision.

The comments of readers on the different first pages also revealed to what extent these readers felt at home with narrative fiction, recognised genre cues, identified stock ideas and phrases, and knew what might appeal to them as readers.

A bonus which did not feature in the original plans was that when the list of titles was revealed, further relevant conversation ensued, casting additional light on the reading histories, as readers remarked on titles, authors, genres and series. Thus the first pages functioned to illuminate all three phases of reading, before, during and after the actual event.

The Pilot Study

Each element of this method of approach was tried out in a pilot study involving two slightly younger teenagers, a boy and a girl. For the most part, their responses showed that the method was potentially very useful; and their comments about their own reading histories were fascinating and thought-provoking. Some small changes were made as a result of their participation and these are outlined below.

The pilot study revealed that the two short stories elicited useful reactions, and that the interrupted reading session worked well.

A change was made as a result of the interview stage. The two pilot readers were simply asked to produce a written reading history, with no cues beyond an oral explanation. Their written notes were cursory and the questions outlined above were devised in order to help students to probe their own backgrounds more thoroughly. In the event, the written notes produced by three of the participants when they arrived at the second interview were still relatively perfunctory, and the questions had to be pursued orally. However, this adaptation of the procedure resulting from the pilot study at least ensured that when the students arrived for the second session, they had given some thought to the kind of information required.

Two alterations were made to the work with the page ones as a result of the pilot project. The two younger teenagers were given only the first fourteen of the eighteen page ones which were used in the final study, but, even though one of them was only fourteen years old, it immediately became apparent that the provision of only children's and adolescents' titles was placing an unnecessary ceiling on their responses. Four adult page ones were therefore added - two from the nineteenth century and two from the twentieth - and these expanded the range of possible reactions.

The second change was made almost by accident. Nobody turned off the tape recorder as the first pilot participant put down the last page one, at the end of the planned activity. He asked what the titles were, and the tape ran throughout the discussion which followed. His reaction to many of the titles prompted additions to his reading history and extensions to his comments on his own tastes. It was immediately decided to include discussion of the revealed titles on all subsequent transcripts.

Procedures and Permissions

Since this project dealt with school students but did not emanate from the Faculty of Education, a two-tiered permission process was required. The Faculty of Library and Information Studies was required to mount an ethics review, and then the ethics review committee of the Department of Secondary Education also cleared the proposal.

After that, permission had to be granted by the relevant school board. Next, the agreement of the principal, the head of the English department, and affected classroom teachers had to be obtained.

Two English 20 classes were involved. The teachers were asked to choose volunteers who represented a range of reading interests. A secondary factor became the need to include at least a few boys, as girls initially showed the most interest. In the event, seven girls and three boys did the initial reading, and two girls and two boys were selected for the follow-up work.

Students selected had to sign a consent form themselves and also produce a signed consent form from their parents. Copies of these forms are included in Appendix 1. No work of any kind was done with a student until permission was granted by the parents, although this sometimes meant reading sessions had to be rescheduled as students forgot to bring the forms back to school.

In most cases, students took a full English period (an hour and fifteen minutes) to complete the readings or the interviews. In one or two cases, students worked in a free period or a lunch hour. The cooperation of the school was exemplary, and greatly appreciated.

All work was done in a small office belonging to the English department. This was private and relatively quiet. There were no significant problems with the taping procedures and the students themselves helped to monitor that the recorder was working.

Chapter 5

SIX READINGS

Six students read the two stories and answered the questions, but were not followed up with interviews. Nevertheless, their contribution to our understanding of the reading process should not be ignored. Ways in which they observed conventions and ways in which they interpolated idiosyncratic assessments offer insight into specific readers at work.

The summaries which follow inevitably select and reduce from the original transcripts which are full of interest in their own right. It has been only partially possible to preserve the flavour of the sessions, which without exception were good-humoured and friendly.

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte, like everybody, was asked what the title "Impostor" suggested to her. She was one of seven who gave a semantic rather than a generic reply: "Someone who's not what they're supposed to be, they're taking the place of someone else." She expected conflict between them.

She noted the future setting straight away and observed early on that the story was "kind of hard to follow." She did eliminate her early speculations about the title, however:

> I didn't know what to expect. I just thought it would be some little conflict about confusing someone with somebody else. . . . It doesn't really have anything to do with that.

She was also able to keep alternative possibilities in mind:

> Olman'll [*sic*] probably talk to his friend and see if they can work something out or try to get hold of Mary or something. Maybe he'll die. (laughs) I don't know.

This capacity to keep an open mind and run more than one prediction continued throughout her reading of this elaborate story; for example: "They'll take him down and start disassembling him and realise that he's not the robot - either that, or he is the robot."

Charlotte also established in a more abstract way that the story was patterned on twists and turns: "He'll probably get screwed up somehow; it seems to happen with the whole story. (laughs)"

She was also able to override an initial prejudice against the story: "It wasn't boring. (laughs) I thought that it would be really boring and long but it was not bad." Left to

herself, she might not have read it, but given the constraint to carry on she was able to perceive some interest.

"The Doll's House" seemed to disappoint Charlotte who expected a more dramatic ending. Her reaction to the story as a whole was subdued:

> It was okay. The ending was not really - the ending was okay. It's not what I expected. I expected them to become friends or something like - I suppose I can't expect a bunch of people to change their way of life for one story, though.

Charlotte's only intertextual reference was one also made by somebody else in the group. She used Little House on the Prairie as a reference point for establishing the degree to which "The Doll's House" was set in the past. She was trying to work out why the lamp was so important in the story. She had noticed the lamp immediately when she read section 1, and at that point thought there might be a ghost in the lamp to account for its prominence. At the end of the story, she seemed dissatisfied and observed,

> Maybe they don't have lamps back then. . . . This sounds like it's past to me. It sounds like Little House on the Prairie. Lamps are a big deal or something.

She made no reference to any symbolic role for the lamp but did comment on the role of the doll's house itself: "I think they're using the doll house in this story to bring friends together, they're using an object."

Charlotte had no problem in reflecting on her own previous misinterpretations. She began the story with few specific expectations and dismissed her earliest ideas very readily:

> I didn't know what to expect.
>
> I had no idea what was going on in the first place.
>
> I didn't think he'd get away or get them off the ship and then fly off, I thought he'd have to go down. I thought he would die or something and then they'd realise that it really was him.
>
> I thought this story would be totally different than what it was!
>
> I thought that it would be really boring and long but it was not bad.

Charlotte, in fact, made more re-interpretive remarks about her expectations of the story, "Impostor," than anyone else in the study. Likewise, in "The Doll's House," she was not anticipating the introduction of the two Kelvey children and commented more than once that she had been expecting the story to concern the doll's house itself. She did not appear

to make any attempt to hang on to her original expectations; she was simply acknowledging that unanticipated elements were being introduced.

TRACY

Three people responded to the title "Impostor" with a comment on genre and Tracy was one of them, suggesting that the title reflected, "sort of a mystery . . . detective type story or something." By the end of section one, she explicitly repudiated this: "I don't quite think it's a mystery or a detective story any more."

With "The Doll's House," she conformed to the majority and raised no genre issue: "I think of maybe a story with a little girl who has a doll house or something and it's just where the doll stays." Even at the end of section 4, after she had succinctly described the nasty scene between Lena and the Kelveys, Tracy stuck to this observation: "I still think it's just about the doll house and the doll family that lives in it." Offered the opportunity to reconsider again at the end of section 5, she said she had no reassessment to make. Her observations about the story itself were acute and accurate, but she seems not to have noticed the contradiction between those and her overview of what the story might offer - in fact, the doll family is not mentioned after the first section.

Reading "Impostor," Tracy noted the future setting at once. She kept a flexible approach to the identity of the impostor, suggesting at one time or another that the title might refer to the outspacers, to the people working on the project, to Olham, to Nelson. As she read on, she took the evidence of the weight given to the title to settle her suspicions on Olham: "'Impostor' pretty much says that Spence Olham is the impostor, like the robot, the humanoid is the impostor as Spence Olham." And later, "I think 'Impostor"s still the humanoid."

Tracy explicitly expressed sympathy for Olham at the end of her reading of "Impostor":

> I could just, when Spence was trying to prove that he was innocent, I could just sort of feel how frustrated he was . . . He was just really frustrated and I just sort of felt sorry for him.

She was not so explicit about "The Doll's House," but it is difficult not to perceive some empathy in her account of what happened when Aunt Beryl found the Kelveys looking at the doll's house. Asked, "What's worth noticing there?" she replied,

> Just that Kezia was outside and the Kelveys, the two girls, they came walking by and Kezia asked them if they wanted to see the doll house. They said no, you know, because they're not, that's not proper, we're not supposed to be talking to you and she's like, Ah it's no big deal, you know, just come on, it's okay. So they went and then they saw it, they saw the doll house and then Kezia, yeah Kezia's aunt, she's like, "Kezia what are you doing? They're just really, Ooops!"

Tracy had clear views on the two endings. She approved of "Impostor": "It was good, I liked it. It sort of has a surprise ending. It kept you in suspense, wanting to know what was going to happen next. I just, I liked it, it was good." About "The Doll's House," she was much more doubtful:

> It was good, it was different. I didn't really see a point to it but I guess there doesn't really have to be a point there. It seemed like there should have been more to it, but it was good, I liked it. . . . It just seems sort of not really exciting.

She found "The Doll's House"

> kind of sad. You see the sort of prejudice in there. I mean, they can't help how their life has turned out. It's good that Kezia doesn't see the same sort of prejudice that everybody else does, she just sees them as two girls that want to see her doll house and there shouldn't be anything wrong with that.

She made no such thematic comment on "Impostor," confining herself to picking out details of plot and commenting briefly on her sympathy with Spence.

TASHA

Tasha was very vague about her expectations on hearing the title, "Impostor": "Pretending, imagining, where they were being someone or something." She was one of only two who made no mention of the setting in the future. Her emphasis instead seemed to fall on the emotional content of the story, on Spence's feelings of betrayal and mistrust. For example, her first response to section 1, when asked what was worth noticing, was to reply: "I think it's how Spence feels, how he feels about what he's doing and what's happening around him." Asked the same question after reading section 2, she said:

> The way that Spence reacted to when they arrested him for being a spy, I thought that was really interesting cause first of all he thought first of all about his family, how he could get in touch with his family.

She noticed Spence's inability to persuade even his friend: "Nobody believed him that he really was the real Spence. . . . He even recalled some of the past and his friend Nelson wouldn't, couldn't believe him, didn't trust him."

This feeling of mistrust became more pervasive by the end of Section 5: "You really can't trust anyone. Now he suspects, I guess, his wife of being an impostor, being a spy, so you really can't rely on anyone." Likewise, after section 6 she was still dwelling on this aspect of the story: "Everybody's turned against him, even his wife, which is ironic because she was the one that he felt he could rely on."

At this stage, Tasha thought that Spence would die, "probably because he can't do anything else." His determination to see what had caused the fire in Sutton Wood caused her to reconsider her pessimistic projection and expect that Spence would be able to convince his friends after all. By the end, she was laughing. Asked what was worth noticing, she replied, "That I was wrong the whole time. That he really was an impostor and he didn't even know it."

Tasha appreciated the surprise ending but was less complimentary about the story as a whole:

> I like the ending but as far as the story as a whole I didn't really enjoy it much. . . . I guess I'm more, I like stories that are more in depth, I guess. I didn't, it was a really surface sort of thing. It had a surprise ending, but, but it just didn't have catchy sentencing or the type of language that I find very interesting.

Given all these reactions, it is perhaps not surprising that Tasha reacted more sympathetically to "The Doll's House." Right from the outset, she offered a more substantial prediction on hearing the title: "I think about children and the ideal house, the way a perfect family is supposed to be." Her observations on the sections of the story, as she read through them, continued to reflect her interest in feelings, but the story offered more appropriate material for this emphasis. She also commented more on the construction of the story. Her first reaction to the question about what was worth noticing in section 1 was:

> The description of the house, how detailed it was, and how he compared it, the house, to the real world, how they think the world should be like this house. . . . And they didn't seem to mind the smell, probably it didn't matter just as long as the house was so beautiful to them.

She expected that the story would show that "life isn't as happy as the doll's house, isn't as beautiful."

In section 2, Tasha immediately commented on "the boundary between the girls" and went on to predict:

> That somehow the poorer girls are going to be better friends, have better friends, a better life, because they have their values and they're not using the girls with the doll house.

She continued to expect some kind of twist to the story to give the Kelveys the upper hand, predicting after section 4, "For the girls to gain respect, to go see the doll house and think it's not so beautiful as everybody said." When she got to the end of the story her observations indicate that she had taken in that no such definitive shaping to the ending had occurred but this did not seem to trouble her. Asked what was worth noticing in the final section, she said: "That they finally got to see the house and no matter if they got in trouble with the aunt, they just got to see it."

Her reaction to the story as a whole was expressed thus: "I think it's really interesting. I can actually apply this, I guess, to nowadays, how children treat other children and how adults treat other adults." She preferred it to "Impostor":

> I think this one's more realistic. I don't really rate the science fiction. . . . I thought the sentencing was very interesting, it had a lot of variety. I wouldn't say the language, the actual vocabulary was all that unique but it had an interesting style.

HANNAH

Hannah started "Impostor" by anticipating "somebody who is not wanted. . . . somebody evil. . . . and I picture it as a man as well." When she began to read, it was the war angle of the story that particularly struck her, and she related this theme to the title:

> I think, when they say impostor, they're relating that to war, like it comes into people's lives and takes over. . . . The impostor is something that comes in and takes over and that's exactly what war is.

More than some readers, Hannah struggled with the intricacies of the plot. In section 4 she had trouble paraphrasing the action: "I think in the end there he managed to go back to the earth or something." Similarly, in section 7 she had difficulty picking out the significance of the reference to Sutton Wood and needed some prompting. The full dialogue may give some idea of her uncertainty at this point:

> Hannah: I think he feels that he's closer to the ship now for some reason.
>
> Interviewer: There's a reference there to Sutton Wood. Do you remember any reference to that earlier in the story?
>
> Hannah: No I don't.
>
> Interviewer: Well, there's a mention of it right at the beginning. There was a fire there.
>
> Hannah: Oh! So that's, that's his - .

Interviewer: What could have caused the fire, do you think?

Hannah: Oh, the ship. Okay, so that's, that's why he's more positive about it cause, he's, he's, the fire - .

Interviewer: The crash may have done it.

Hannah: Yeah. Yeah. And that's where the robot is.

By the end of the story, Hannah had registered the workings of the plot sufficiently to sum up the resolution quite neatly:

> The story kept going all the way up to the end. . . . And he himself didn't even know. He assumed that he really was Olham or whatever. . . . And Nelson was right all along. . . . And Olham was dead. And it did explode. Right there at the very end. . . . And it probably ended up killing everybody there. Just like they said it would do.

She approved of this twist of plot.

> I had no idea it was going to end like that. Sometimes in a story you can predict the ending easily. I thought that it was going to end, that it had already ended in section 8 I think it was, but I was wrong. It was right up to the end, the suspense.

Hannah had very limited expectations on first hearing the title of "The Doll's House": "I just picture a doll house. . . . Rather a large one. And in a child's room." However, she took in many relevant elements in section 1:

> They go into deep detail as to what the house looks like. . . . And the little people that live in the house. And how the children don't seem to belong; they're larger than the parents, something like that. And they go into detail as to the smell of the house. . . . And how interesting it is as to how it opens up.

Reflecting on section 2, Hannah outlined the differences between the Kelveys and the Burnells and suggested some kind of situation between them might follow in the rest of the story: "Maybe the doll house will be the, the thing that brings them together. Just like the title." By the end of section 5, she has confirmed this idea, "The doll house, the title, like I said, brought them together."

At the end of section 5, Hannah anticipated that this development might lead to "maybe friendship. Some sort of relationship now." However, she did not seem surprised by the low-key ending. She observed,

> That Elsie I think? She, she's the one that never had any emotions or smiles or nothing, but the fact that Kezia invited her in, I think, and showed her the doll house really impressed her. . . . And it impressed her, made her feel so good that she didn't even notice the scolding from the aunt. She really completely went out of her head. Whereas if most kids get scolded they don't quite easily forget it.

Prompted for further reaction, she said, "I think that just the fact that that made their day. They don't get to see something like that ever."

Hannah summed up her reaction to the story as a whole as follows:

> How little people appreciate what they have as well as how prejudiced people can be. . . . And how people aren't prejudiced when they're young; it's something they're kind of taught. . . . But there's the odd person that doesn't believe it. Like Kezia.

She enjoyed "The Doll's House," saying, "I think it shows a moral, morals, gives some sort of meaning." She did not, however, express a preference for one story over the other.

CASSIE

Cassie made an indeterminate effort to pin down the expectations roused in her by the title "Impostor":

> Probably someone who is trying to prove that he's someone but he's like, to prove that he's someone but he's not, someone that he isn't. . . . He's like a fake basically. . . . You know, he's trying to guess.

She was the only reader who missed the reference to the future setting by the end of the first section but then corrected herself at the end of section 2: "I thought it was going to be back, like, back in World War II, but actually I didn't realise that it was in the, like, future, like farther into the future, I didn't realise that." She didn't think this would greatly affect the story. "Not really, like, it's probably about the same, like."

Like many of the others, Cassie quickly took in that the story would be hard to predict. Asked at the end of section 3 what she now expected from the rest of the story, she said,

> I don't know; it keeps changing! (laughs) I suppose that they may find out that he is the robot. Or they may find that he's not and he'll go back to his regular life. Or he may be the robot and how they killed him or how he tried to plead for his life or whatever.

She kept her options open at the end of section 4, but was beginning to favour one possibility over the others:

> That he'll get back to earth and he'll prove that he was, like, he is really who he says he is. Or, he may not but I have a feeling that he is who he says he is. . . . I don't know; it's hard to say. This is confusing, it changes every few minutes so...

She temporarily switched her suspicions to Mary: "She might be the one that was changed into a robot or whatever, and, like, she is trying, I don't know if she is trying to kill him or something. But - it's weird." She said,

> The story's changing, like, it went from being a normal kind of story to now it's kind of suspenseful; you don't know what's going to happen next and who's going to end up killing who or whatever, you know, it's kind of confusing.

Even by the end of section 7, Cassie refused to commit herself. "I still don't know what to expect." Section 8 convinced her that there would be a happy ending. Unfortunately there is no way for the tape to record the very wry face with which she finished reading the final section. Asked what was worth noticing, she said, "That he was the robot. (laughs) Hmm." She summarised the last episode and concluded with a laugh: "Weird ending!"

Her reaction to the story as a whole was positive:

> It's very suspenseful, like, it changes, like, every section that I read, I had a different feedback on it. . . . Like, it was totally different, like, it kept changing, like, that's good, like, I like that in stories when they keep changing and stuff.

Asked about the title, "The Doll's House," Cassie was immediately reminded of the book Flowers in the Attic, though she could not say why. Section 1 changed that: "I don't think it's going to be like Flowers in the Attic at all any more. It seems to be, like, just a little girl's daydreams about the house."

By section 2, she had a new intertextual reference: "It seems to be like a Little House on the Prairie kind of story."

In section 1, Cassie commented on the description of the house:

> It was talking about, it was describing the house, how detailed it was, and it just told all the details and colours and stuff, and how amazed the children were with this house. And one little girl, she liked the lamp on the dining room table the best.

After reading section 2, Cassie pointed out how the other children are trying to appeal to Isabel to be able to see the house. She predicted:

> I think that maybe, hmm, that in the end that the two little children that are, like, off on their own, are going to end up going to see the house, like she's going to invite them. And she's going to gloat for a while and she's going to walk around thinking that she's, like, something special and then she'll realise that, you know, these children are less fortunate than her so that she's going to invite them over to see the house no matter what her parents say or whatever.

By the end of section 5, Cassie was still expecting some tinge of moral reform; she expected of the last segment of the story:

> That her aunt will be upset at first and she'll try to talk her way out of it and, like, her aunt will see that she's right, that, you know, you shouldn't judge people like that.

However, when she did read the final section she did not quarrel with the lack of dramatic reform:

> The little girl has still gotten in trouble but the Kelveys, like, they now felt almost equal to everyone else, like they, they had seen the little lamp, like, that's what the little girl had said at the very end. They sat, once they got far away from the house they sat down and they just thought about what they had seen at the house and stuff.

Cassie's reaction to the story as a whole was as follows:

> I think the little girl was very brave to have them over and I think she did the right thing even though she got in trouble. Like, you shouldn't really judge people by what their parents do or what, you know they look like or how they dress. . . . I like her attitude actually.

She preferred "The Doll's House" to "Impostor",

> because it tells you something, like, it helps you, I don't know, it teaches you something about life. . . . The first one was good; it was very suspenseful but I didn't know what was going to happen and the second one, I really liked it, it was a good story.

Cassie was ambivalent about the virtues of a suspenseful, surprising story.

> Suspense novels are good but as long as you know basically what is going to happen. . . . Not that you're sitting there wondering what's supposed to happen next, like if you know what's going to happen then it's more enjoyable to read, kind of, like, cause you're waiting for that good moment when, you know. . . . Most of the books that I like to read are ones that, you know, I can figure out what's going to happen and they have, like, good messages behind them and stuff.

ADUKU

Aduku anticipated some form of deceit when he heard the title "Impostor." He suggested, "Deceit in the story, somebody playing somebody who's not. Maybe a scam or a scheme or a swindle or something."

After section 1, Aduku noted the future setting first of all and commented on possibilities for the story: "I guess we'll see where something will happen with these aliens and I guess, later on we'll find out what Major Peters has, the significance he has in this story."

By the end of section 2, he perceived Nelson beginning to feel more doubt and more guilt, and reversed his assessment of the title: "Well, I guess, right now it's the other way round, where I guess he's being assessed as someone he isn't. . . . Instead of him playing someone he isn't."

By the end of section 3, he was smiling as he said,

> Now I'm starting to feel some doubt because there's now two possibilities. He either could be the real Olham or be a robot, and there's really no way to tell until, I guess, he's disassembled. And right now I think that Nelson has no doubt in his mind that this is a robot, not his friend. . . . It's hard to say but I <u>think</u> it is the real Olham but I'm not sure. It's hard to tell, hard to tell.

He predicted, "Something will happen to save him, or, I don't know, something will change direction."

By the end of section 6, Aduku had changed his suspicions.

> Here I started to get the feeling that it's not Olham who's the robot but Peters. . . . And that Peters is now trying to make everybody believe that Olham is the robot so they lose the suspicion of him and I'm starting to get the feeling that he knows more than everybody else because he's a robot and that he, cause I was trying to figure out how he knew all this information about the robot. . . . And how he knew what Olham was going to do and where he'd go back and how he knew all this information about how he would feel and how he would react to things.

By section 8, Aduku decided that Olham was human and predicted "nothing more than him going home to his life." He laughed as he finished section 9, and although he seemed a bit confused about what was gleaming in the chest of the body, making a reference to the bomb being there, he then referred to the knife. He also commented on the shape of the story:

> There's a lot of twists to it, there was a lot of, I guess, suspense and conflict. And I guess you really don't see the climax of this story till the very end when you find the knife.

"The Doll's House" did not suggest a great deal to Aduku as a title: "I guess it all has to do something with a doll's house. . . . I guess, as a gift or a present or something of some kind." He noted the depth of detail in section 1:

> As they start to describe everything you feel it's actually a real house. And then they start describing the particular parts of the doll house and the dolls in the house that don't seem to fit inside. . . . I guess, they're too big for most of them to fit. And then they talk about the lamp and how one of the girls feel that the lamp is perfect for the house and seems to make, bring out the best in the house.

Aduku also summed up the relationship between the Burnell sisters quite succinctly:

> Isabel is the one that chooses the people that are allowed to come and see the doll's house. She's the one that gets, that gets the privilege to tell everybody about it and the two youngest, Lottie and Kezia, have to stand around, I guess, and be happy that they have the doll's house. . . . Isabel starts describing the doll's house to her friends and Kezia gets mad at her because she doesn't put as much, I guess, specialness to the lamp as she sees that there should be.

By the end of section 3 he was predicting: "Maybe she would try to sneak in the Kelveys to see the house, to see the house, and probably, the Kelveys would probably get more insulted."

He commented on the end of the story as follows:

> Aunt Beryl chases the Kelveys away and she starts yelling at them and Kezia. And then we see that there was something on her mind throughout the day, that she was being threatened by this man to come and see her by some bush and then you see, they show the two Kelveys sitting down and they are all, I guess, all flustered from being scared away and then, at the end, they have the youngest say, Oh I've seen the lamp. I guess you feel that she sees the lamp as Kezia did.

Asked to describe his reaction to the story as a whole, Aduku said,

> Certainly not as exciting as the other one but I guess it's just talking, it describes how life in those times were for the poor and the rich, how they were distinguished between each other, and how their reactions were to each other.

He expressed a definite preference for "Impostor" because it is a more exciting story.

Chapter 6

FOUR READINGS - AND FOUR READERS

Four readers were selected for follow-up interviews and discussion of the first pages. In all four cases, the follow-up data made a substantial contribution to the picture of these students as readers, although it sometimes happened that the expectations of the researcher, based on the original reading, were thoroughly confounded.

JENNY

The Readings

The single most striking aspect of Jenny's reading behaviour was her unwillingness to predict. Asked what expectations were aroused by the title, "Impostor," she said, "Somebody, I don't know, somebody that's not wanted, something that's not wanted. (pause) No." When she was asked at the end of section 1 what she would expect from the rest of the story she was very surprised and said, "Like, if I were to read the end part?" For section 1, she came up with a reasonable prediction:

> Well, probably, that maybe they, this man that he meets will find something, some sort of breakthrough on the project and it will be over and this guy will be able to have a rest.

However, asked the same question on section 2, she answered a bit more luridly:

> I don't know - a big fight and then he gets a gun, (laughs) holds those two guys, and he talks to his wife on the vidscreen and he gets back - I don't know, something like that.

At the end of section 3, she put in a mild protest, smiling and saying "Shoot!" when asked to predict again. At the end of section 4 she still observed, "I don't know," even as she did make a prediction. After that, the options in the story closed in a little and she settled down to a line of prediction that conformed to the configuration of the story. Throughout, she was aware that the story offered alternative possibilities, and even at the end of section 8 she held open two possible endings:

> A happy ending? I don't know. Everybody says sorry - or maybe the bomb's not detonated. Maybe it'll go off. I don't know - something like that. It could go either way.

Although she did not seem to take kindly to the exercise of prediction, Jenny in fact picked up the salient points of the story all the way through. Here she is on section 7, noting

both the reference back to the first mention of Sutton Wood and also the fact that nothing is yet certain.

> Jenny: Just the connection with Sutton, what is it? Sutton Wood. His wife was telling him about that, and obviously that's where this ship has crashed and burned with the robot in it - or, he thinks.
>
> Interviewer: You're still not sure which way?
>
> Jenny: Yeah.

Jenny read slowly and apologised for that at the end of the first session. She was also diffident about her interpretations. Once, in fact, she did go a bit astray, right at the end of "Impostor."

> Well, this, I guess - I'm probably wrong - this Nelson guy, I guess, was the impostor all along and he never knew it and he just took it upon himself to think that Spencer was, and then the bomb went off and it was obviously very big.

That the gleam of metal in the body was the knife, proving that Spence was indeed the robot, did not occur to her. However, the alternative ending she constructed, while clumsier than the original, is sustainable, at least for the length of time it was actually under consideration. And she was happy with it; she praised the story: "Oh, it's pretty suspenseful, like, for a story. Like, I don't get really, like, intrigued by stories that often, but that was - it kept me in suspense."

With "The Doll's House" Jenny resisted more than one attempt to comment on expectations raised by the title.

> Interviewer: This one's called "The Doll's House." Does that suggest anything to you?
>
> Jenny: No.
>
> Interviewer: Nothing at all?
>
> Jenny: Oh, I always get fooled! (laughs) See, I don't know.
>
> Interviewer: You don't have to be right! This is not an intelligence test or anything. I'm just asking if that title suggests any kind of story to you.
>
> Jenny: Well, it might have something to do with little girls, I don't know. (laughs)

Her immediate reaction to section 1 was even more negative. Asked what she would expect from the rest of the story, she said, "That it'll probably just drag on (laughs) and be really boring and - I don't know, that's about it." She continued with this gloomy

anticipation throughout, but in fact her subsequent predictions were quite close to the story itself. For example, after section 2 she suggested: "Kezia will probably bring the Kelveys to see it because they'll be the only ones interested in the little lamp or something like that."

By the end of section 3, she allowed herself to say, "Well, it'll still be boring and drag on but it might get a bit better. I don't know. We'll see." She correctly suggested that the Kelveys would get to see the doll's house and that Kezia would get in trouble, and at the end she observed:

> That these Kelveys, the youngest one notices the little lamp and maybe that's kind of significant cause that's what Kezia noticed as well and maybe that just shows that they have similarities and they can be alike although they're different as in, I don't know what, poverty and being rich or whatever, but that's about it.

Asked her reaction to the story as a whole, she damned with faint praise: "Well, it's okay. Kind of, I don't know, kind of a little lesson I guess. I don't know. In some way. But it was boring and it did drag on."

This opinion about the boring, dragging nature of the story was one she said she had reached in the first paragraph, and nothing had caused her to change her mind at any point. She continued in her very qualified praise:

> It was, it was okay. It was not as interesting as the first story but it was just, I don't know, I guess, a little lesson, how people kind of can be alike or they can be so different.

Jenny made what was probably the most clear-cut interpretive leap of all ten readings in an effort she made to understand the social divisiveness revealed in "The Doll's House." Searching for an explanation of the snobbery shown by the girls, she said at the end of section 5:

> Kezia brought those two girls in and she, obviously Kezia's different than most of these snobbish people, and, the more I think about it, the more - I don't know if I'm right - these Kelveys could be black and then the rest be white. I don't know, that's just like, because they have some harsh prejudice against these people and maybe that could be it because it seems these take place in times before, so that <u>could</u> be it.

Of course, there is no evidence in the story to support this suggestion, but it appears to be an interesting example of a reader searching her repertoire of conventions to make sense of what otherwise seems gratuitous.

Choosing Jenny

Jenny stood out from other readers in two ways which appeared to lend themselves to further exploration. She was very reluctant to predict anything. It appeared she would rather be carried along and preferably surprised. She did, however, continually allow for the fact that the story might develop in several different ways, which may have contributed to her reluctance to commit herself to a prediction.

Jenny also differed from other readers in the way that her antipathy to "The Doll's House" was so immediate and so strong. In one way it would be possible to describe her reading of that story as resistant; she anticipated correctly but seemed to use the correctness of her predictions as a reinforcement for her scorn. In another way, her attitude was not so forceful as the word resistant suggests. She went through the motions but was unengaged from beginning to end. More than any other reader, she was disinclined to let the story set its own terms.

Unlike some of the other readers, Jenny showed a considerable lack of enthusiasm for the thematic aspects of the stories. Although she declined to decry moral stories outright, her endorsement was lukewarm: "I guess I approve."

All these elements distinguished Jenny and made it reasonable to suppose that this was a reader whose reading past might illuminate her strongly individual views.

The Interview

Jenny's account of her reading history shows what appears to be a very consistent approach to reading over many years. She is diffident about her reading expertise, but if there is one thing certain it is that she knows what she likes: excitement. "I don't know, from when I could read and comprehend things, then I just always like things that, like, thrilled me and excited me and stuff like that."

Secrets by Danielle Steel was the example she gave of a book that satisfied her urge for novelty and change:

> The story about it, like, some, like, it was just, it was exciting, like it wasn't, like, it kept on moving and there was always something new like a new twist here and there. . . . And so it just, I was interested in it and it kept me wanting to read it and I did.

Jenny is the youngest of four children. As a small child, she was read to every night, either by one of her parents or by her older brother. Her favourite books were by Dr. Seuss.

Jenny actually remembers the moment when she suddenly discovered she could read:

Jenny: Okay. well, I had problems with reading cause I went to a French immersion school.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Jenny: And we had reading tests in Grade 2 and, I'll never forget this, I had, I was, like, I couldn't read these (two words inaudible) and my reading level was the lowest out of my class and so the teacher just, like, told my mum, called her in and said, You have to let her read, you have to, like, buy her books and let her read. And then from there on my reading took off and I, like, my level, like, increased rapidly, like, and, like, we did it by grades, like, like, what level you could read at.

Interviewer: Mmm hmm.

Jenny: And my level by the end of that grade reached Grade 5 level of reading and before it was, like, just below Grade 2.

Interviewer: Right. Can you remember that year? Can you remember if you attitude to reading changed as your ability to read improved?

Jenny: Oh, yeah, yeah, I guess. Cause I remember there was, I got, like, this little hard cover Cinderella book. The first time I opened it, I just sat there and I cried. (laughs) And then, after my mom helped me out with it and, like, took everything apart, I understood it and then I liked it and I read it all the time.

Interviewer: Can you remember - it's a long time ago, I know - can you remember whether you were determined to learn to read because you were so humiliated by this reading test or did you want to learn to read because of the pleasure of being able to read?

Jenny: Basically, no, well, cause I kind of felt like I had to.

Interviewer: Right.

Jenny: And after I did, I did like to read, I enjoyed it and then it's like, right now I just, I don't read much cause I don't have time to read.

Interviewer: Right.

Jenny: But in the summer, like, I'll go to the library and get out books and buy books and borrow books, from my mum.

Interviewer: Right. Can you remember any moment when all of a sudden you thought, Oh, I've cracked this, I can read now.

Jenny: Yeah. I, like, specifically the one book.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Jenny: I, my mum was going out that evening and I was sitting on her bed and I was, I was trying to, I was trying to read it and then all of a sudden I was reading it and it just, like, came, and I just sat there and I read it and then she left and she was all proud of me.

Interviewer: Can you remember what the book was?

Jenny: Cinderella.

Interviewer: Was this the same Cinderella book?

Jenny: Yeah.

Interviewer: And all of a sudden the light turned on?

Jenny: Mmm hmm. (laughs)

Interviewer: Do you remember the feeling at that point?

Jenny: Yeah. Oh, yeah, I do, cause I can just picture, like, I was sitting on the corner of the bed and I was reading, I was just struggling and then - I was reading, oh my gosh, I don't believe how I can remember this gig(?) - and then all of a sudden it was like, it was just like, it was exciting cause - .

Interviewer: Yeah, I should think so.

Jenny: I'd never been able to read before really. Well, I could but not very well.

Interviewer: Laboriously.

Jenny: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, you're lucky to be able to remember that. Most people can't remember the moment.

Jenny: No, I know. Just that one thing, that one book just always sticks out in my mind. I don't know why.

Interviewer: Well, I should think that's why. (both laugh) All of a sudden this feeling of success.

Jenny: Exactly.

After this breakthrough, Jenny read for pleasure all through her childhood, making regular family trips to the library. However, she remembers almost no books from this period; the only title that she could recall was a set of The Wind in the Willows. Reading was especially a summer activity.

Reading is still mainly a summer and holiday activity for Jenny. She appears to have a dual motivation. Asked why she reads, Jenny replied:

> Usually to overcome boredom. Like, I'll get tired of TV and, like, just like, the same old thing and so when a book looks exciting I'll read it. I don't know. I also hear, it's like, just like, I don't know, just to keep myself going and, like, not to fall back on my reading level and stuff. . . . Just so I know that I'm keeping up and things.

Many emphases seem to have added up to a sense of duty in Jenny's approach to reading, and possibly contributed to her adamant insistence that she must be entertained as well. She referred to books she read as a child: "Like it was all, like, just kids' books, it wasn't, it wasn't, it wasn't anything big." Her school reading program seems to have reinforced the idea of quantity:

> We had, like, charts, and if you brought in the books that you read, like, during the week and stuff, and you referred to them, you got, like stars all the way up and there was, like, if you reached a certain point you got, like, a candy.

In Grade 6, she and another girl had a competition to see who could read the most and, to this day, Jenny entertains considerable scepticism about the truthfulness of her friend's claim to have read three or four large novels in a week. The two girls quizzed each other on what they had read, and generally exchanged views about their books.

Despite the fact that her conversation is larded with stuffing words such as "like", Jenny is quite articulate about her reading activities, and perceptive about her own predilections and shortcomings. She describes a good reader as follows:

> Probably someone that reads a lot. . . . And when you read a lot you eventually read fast. And so they obviously read fast if they read a lot. And someone that can comprehend and, like, get deeper meaning out of it than just, like, what's on the top.

Asked if she would describe herself as a good reader by that standard, Jenny answered readily:

> Not at all. I, cause, like, I, like, I do read a fair amount but I read really slow and, like, sometimes I'll understand, like, a deeper meaning and I'll try, like, I'll think about it and I'll pull something else out of it. But, I don't know, I just, like, compare myself to other people in the class and, just, like, my reading isn't as good as other people's, that's the way I see it, just cause they can, I don't know, they can read faster and they can still get a lot out of it even if they read fast.

Yet Jenny is enough of a reader that she is quite clear about her own reading behaviour:

> Interviewer: When you read a story, where are you in that story?
>
> Jenny: Oh, like you want me to say, like, I'm not just the reader, I'm - .

Interviewer: Yeah. I mean, do you feel as if you're in the story?

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I put myself in every character possible and I try to feel, like, I try to feel how I would feel in that situation.

Interviewer: Mmm hmm.

Jenny: And I'll just see if I like being, like, the way they live, their lifestyles, and, like, I always put myself in their situation, right into their character.

Interviewer: So if you're reading a conversation between two people, are you switching?

Jenny: Yeah, like, I'll read it once, like, and I'll put myself, like if it's a story where there, like, one lady is narrating it from, like her point of view, I'll put myself in her point of view and then when she comes to a conversation where she's talking to someone, I'll keep myself in that, like, in her position.

Interviewer: Right.

Jenny: And then just read on or whatever. But then I'll think about it after and I'll put myself in the other person's point of view and just see the difference there and, like, compare it.

Interviewer: Right. Okay, this is a related question but it's not exactly the same thing? When you read a story, where in that story is the author? Do you feel the author there or do you just forget about the author?

Jenny: No, I'll forget about the author. I'll take the book over in this sense, I guess.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, you've partly answered this but I wonder if you could put it in slightly more general terms. What makes you want to read more? What gives you the feeling, I don't want to stop, I want to carry on?

Jenny: Well, I guess, well, entertainment purposes like I said before. Like, TV becomes really monotonous after a while, so reading just'll take me away from it and I really like, actually when I think about it, I like putting myself in other people's situations and so that's also why I'll read and, like, if it's exciting and - .

Ignoring the infuriating speech mannerisms, this exchange is full of interest. Jenny does not seem to be a particularly introspective or reflective reader but when challenged she can provide a clear account of her reading activity. Her metaphor of taking over the book is a vivid one. She requires her books to be entertaining but when she is satisfied that she has found what she needs, she engages herself thoroughly.

Jenny uses the library regularly during the summer and also browses through her mother's extensive collection of books. Her mother buys books regularly and will often buy a book or two for Jenny as well. Jenny's behaviour is the same in bookstore and library. She does not distinguish particularly between hardback and paperback.

> I'll read the back of books, like I'll just start anywhere and read the backs of them. I guess I do look at authors sometimes. And then I'll read, like, the beginning and if it seems okay I'll take it. And then I'll move on to the next rack and do the same.

She applies the same methodical approach when she starts reading:

> I'll start reading it and about, I'd say, a quarter of the way through I'll decide if I'm, if I'm interested, and if not then I'll just put it down and I'll find another book. But if it's interesting then I'll keep it going but if it, like, drags on, like, towards the end, then I'll just close it or I'll jump to the end and read the end.

Her requirement for entertainment is unremitting:

> I, I get really bored, okay? I, like, I have, I have to have something that will, like, keep, it has to keep on going. And adventure probably. Cause anything else, I just fall asleep.

At the same time, this entertainment seems to be fairly ephemeral. Asked about the most interesting book she had ever read, Jenny proffered the title Secrets by Danielle Steel. Yet her description of that book was lukewarm:

> Okay, well, that's the only one that, like, sticks out in my mind. Like, it doesn't like, totally thrill me but, just, like, there was something about it. I think it was, like, it was a bunch of stories. I don't remember it but it always, like, I've read a lot of books and it's the only one that, like, stands out.

Jenny tried other books by Danielle Steel but couldn't find any more that she enjoyed. Asked about authors she did like, she paused to think and eventually suggested Dean R. Koontz and Sidney Sheldon.

Her interest in the book while she is actually reading it is sufficient that if she lost a book and could not find out what happened to the characters, "it would aggravate me really badly," but once the book is finished she allows herself a couple of days to "meditate on the first book," and then she goes on to another. When engrossed in a book,

> I read everywhere. When I have a book. Like, when I'm eating, when I'm, like, lying in bed, when I'm in the bath or something or just sitting watching TV, I'll read during commercials.

But when the book is over, she is finished with it. She will occasionally reflect on the ending or consider a character's actions, but the books do not appear to figure prominently in her

thoughts for very long after she has put them down. It is possible that this is a reflection on the kinds of stories she reads rather than on her own nature.

The Page Ones

The perusal of the page ones for the most part showed Jenny manifesting the behaviour she described in the interview. She was very quick to decide whether or not she would want to read on. For the most part, her rejections were accompanied by terse reasons - boring, too descriptive, dragged on. However, she was scathing to the point of loquacity about the two series romances (Practice Makes Perfect and Keeping Secrets, the Sweet Valley book). Of the latter she said, as she put the page down: "Ah! That seems sappy. It, I don't know, you can tell this mystery that her dad has or whatever, it's going to, it's going to be something dumb!" Pressed to elaborate, she added,

> Well, like it says, Being twins made them as close as any two people could get, like give me a break! And it's like, Oh I'm dying of curiosity - yay! I don't know, it's just, it's so gaaah!

Later, when the titles and authors were revealed, she added,

> They're all in the same lines and you can just, like, pick them out. It's like, oh yeaggh, they're so dumb. No, I've never read any of those.

Somewhat surprisingly, she also dismissed the Stephen King title, The Gunslinger, part of The Dark Tower trilogy. "Boring," she said. Asked to expand, she went on: "All the description. It didn't really get into anything. Like, big deal, he's in the desert. It happens all the time in books."

Jenny did, however, when the authors and titles were revealed to her, speak very highly of one Stephen King book, which from her description is almost certainly The Eyes of the Dragon. She is not a horror book reader for the most part.

> Actually I, they're fairly predictable, but, yeah, I don't, I don't usually read horror novels cause I'll, they'll just freak me out, just to know that it's there and in this book. I'll, like, stay away from it.

However, she has read some King books. The Eyes of the Dragon was the only one which particularly impressed her:

> It was really good. It was, it was based in the past in, like, times of, like castles and stuff like that and I really liked that. . . . That was incredible. I thought it was really good.

This enthusiasm ties in with her reaction to King Arthur: The Sword from the Lake: "Yeah, I'd probably, I'd probably read that. I don't know, I'd like to see what happens to her husband. It seems more interesting."

Jenny recognised The Outsiders and went into some detail about how she had been attracted to the story before she came to the names of the characters which gave the title away:

> But, like, reading just that top part [she put her hand over the bottom half of the paper] I liked it because he's saying, wait, no, just in the beginning part right here, like, he likes putting himself in other people's characters. . . . And that's what I like to do so I like to see how he does it. So that kind of caught me.

The Outsiders was a school text but Jenny had already read it by the time they were assigned it in school, so she didn't read it again. Her discussion of this title came late in the interview and by this stage she seemed much more aware of her own interests and activities as a reader. (It is worth observing that Jack Thomson, in his major study of teenagers and their reading, found

> many examples of students becoming aware of aspects of their own values and identities in the act of talking about their responses to texts, as well as many examples of them making their own reading processes explicit to themselves. (343)

Jenny similarly appeared to develop self-awareness as she proceeded and the later parts of the interview are more introspective.)

The mention of Paul Zindel triggered enthusiasm for The Pigman: "I really liked that. . . . That was incredible, that was really good. A load of morals there."

The Pigman was one of only two school-selected titles mentioned with approval by her; the other was A Separate Peace. Most books read for English class she did not care for:

> I've never liked anything we've read in school. They always pick, like, the dumb - not dumb, just, just, like, you know, the morally inclined stories. . . . But when I think about it we really haven't done much reading. Like novels and stuff.

On the whole, she was relieved about that. "I enjoy doing it on my own and picking what I like, not what somebody else likes and they're forcing me to read. . . . So I'd much rather choose my own books."

There is obviously some ambiguity here; Jenny doesn't like morally inclined stories but she comments approvingly on the morals in The Pigman.

Jenny approved of humour as a way of catching her interest, but did not, for example, appear to perceive the first page of Matilda as funny: "I would have been interested in, like,

what parents thought and, like, if I could, like, relate my own parents to it." She suggested she might have read it when younger and then continued:

> Like, I'm sure when I'm older I wouldn't be able to think - well, actually I would, I would be able to, like I'd try to think if my parents, like, thought highly of me or whatever, and I'd put myself in, like, if I was, like, a disgusting, revolting kid, and they, I'd just, like, compare it from there.

Of the adult novels, it was Cat's Eye which appealed the most to her:

> Actually, I kind of like that. It, like, really gets you thinking and you, you see if you can relate to that, like if you, like agree with it basically, about time and stuff, and, I don't know, like, I don't think it would pick up but it kind of seems really philosophical - is that the word?

The Songlines might have interested her if it had been about Arkady's father who escaped from the cattle car, but she suspected that it would not be (as indeed it is not). Pride and Prejudice she dismissed: "Boring. . . . Just - who cares? It's one of those ones."

Her reaction to the first page of Bleak House was more tentative.

> Jenny: Didn't grab me. It was, dragged on. I don't know, it might pick up. It's just like every, I don't know, a lot of books are really descriptive in, like, the first page and, like, maybe a page or so later it might get more exciting. But that was kind of boring.
>
> Interviewer: Is there any hint there that it might liven up?
>
> Jenny: Well, the end part. "Most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds this day in the sight of heaven and earth" - I don't know, there's just, like, a comparison or whatever there and it could, I don't know, something from there could be brought out and made exciting, I don't know.
>
> Interviewer: Just a little trace of potential.
>
> Jenny: Yeah. Little. Really small! (laughs)

There is a tantalising hint in the discussion of the adult titles (and also in her approval of A Separate Peace) that one day Jenny might read more than the ephemeral adventures that she reads now. Her high-speed assessment of the page ones is not entirely dominated by issues of immediate excitement, although her main questions throughout appear to be, "Does it drag on? Will it pick up?"

CARL

The Readings

Carl's approach to the two stories is difficult to sum up succinctly. He combined some moments of shrewd perception with an eye for thematic potential; but at the same time he sometimes ran into confusion of his own making. Some of this may have been caused by nervousness; he seemed considerably more tense than other readers. By the end of the second session he had relaxed somewhat, but the whole process was a more solemn affair with Carl than with the other three participants who went through both sessions; the tape records far less laughter during his interview than during the others.

Be that as it may, Carl was certainly capable of significant insight into both stories. His account of the opening segment of "The Doll's House" was perceptive and articulate:

> Interviewer: Okay. What do you think is worth noticing in that first section?
>
> Carl: Well, I guess, first of all, the two different, almost contradicting, opinions or descriptions of the doll house. First of all I notice the aunt's and how it almost seems like it's out of place, how the smell, how the colours, they just don't seem proper. And then you come to see the side of how the children view the doll house and how it's just right for them and it's how everything should be, so plain and natural like that. They describe the house and how the lamp base, the lamp seems to be the only thing that seems to fit in. Or not the only thing but, like, it's, it just seems perfect with the house. Like, some of the other things, maybe, kind of don't seem to fit in.
>
> Interviewer: Mmm hmm. What would you expect from the rest of the story on the strength of reading that section?
>
> Carl: Maybe how the description of the doll house might reflect some other situation or something else that might happen.

We can see here a reader extracting essential information and holding it as a possible pattern for what might be worth noticing next; Carl did a good job of it.

Yet often Carl resorted to a generalised commentary on the possible development of a story without incorporating actual details as he did so successfully at the beginning of "The Doll's House." Many of his comments on "Impostor" reflected an abstract acknowledgement of shape and pattern in the story without necessarily incorporating what he had just actually read. For example, commenting on section 1, and having just observed that "the things that are going on don't seem to be surprising to them, so it seems almost a part of everyday life," he said:

> Well, it would seem that something is, something is going to develop from one of those things that happens every day. Perhaps something is going to develop further which doesn't happen every day, something different, something which is unexpected, something that can't be prevented, maybe.

He showed further awareness of the constructed nature of the story in section 2 when he said,

> Oslam [*sic*] has done something, or obviously these people that have arrested him think he's done something. He doesn't seem too sure about what he's done and it seems to be kept a secret to the reader for some reason, perhaps possibly because it's going to kind of surprise or somehow it's going to tie in later.

Carl showed a marked propensity to look for thematic elements in the story. By section 3 he was observing, "He's having a tough time proving who he really is. That might be the main stream, or the main idea of the story, you know, to prove who you really are."

Asked what he would expect from the rest of the story, he said,

> Seeing if Olham can prove who he really is. That might suggest how people in society today maybe don't really know who they really are and they can't prove who they really are.

After section 4 he expanded on that idea. Again asked what he expected from the rest of the story, he said:

> Maybe just perhaps how, how he gets back and how everybody (inaudible word) can make a mistake as to what they see as real might not always be real, cause he wasn't the robot.

By the end of section 5, this thematic focus was actually leading Carl astray in the perception of details. In the story, Olham hesitates to ring his own front doorbell because the house seems unnaturally silent and he senses a trap. Carl, however, was pursuing his idea about reality and missed this plot detail:

> He gets home and it's kind of strange that he rings the doorbell instead of just walking right in because, well, it's his house so he should just have to walk in, so maybe he's got a sense of not really knowing who he is. Hopefully the doctor can straighten that out.

Carl again came adrift over the reference to Sutton Wood which he could not recall from the beginning of the story. Given a little prompting about the fire, he said: "Fire and war? . . . Maybe he's starting to bring it together again." Asked what he expected from the rest of the story, he said,

> Maybe somehow that the fire and the war had something to do with maybe, how he got mixed up and how there was confusion and maybe that's where all this is coming from, the confusion of the war and the fire.

What he is driving at makes a certain amount of sense, but again he is missing the detail in pursuit of the larger picture.

Carl considered "Impostor" rather confusing and preferred "The Doll's House." His comments on the second story are much more assured. He summarised the social relationships quite successfully, and drew out the role of the lamp: "Maybe just the doll house is just a, acts as almost maybe symbolism or the light, the lamp, how it seems to fit in while the Kelveys, they seem, they don't seem to fit in." Describing section 5, where the Kelveys come to see the house, he mixed up the two sisters, but he certainly took in the implications of the conclusion:

> Aunt Beryl, she seems to have felt better now the Kelveys are gone and she's given the kids a scolding. It makes her feel a little bit like, a little more light-hearted. The Kelveys seem to also have felt a burden lifted from them. As they saw the house they now feel that they've been accepted even thought they were booted out of the house. They seem to feel they've accomplished something.

Choosing Carl

Carl was selected because of the discrepancies in the way he read the two stories. To put it in Rabinowitz's terms, he was good at rules of signification but less acute when it came to applying rules of configuration. He demonstrated a greater tendency to look for thematic elements than any other reader, but sometimes stumbled over details of plot. He showed a marked preference for "The Doll's House" over "Impostor." His predictions in "Impostor" also tended towards development of thematic more than plot issues (again, unlike most of the other readers who tended to concentrate on the plot); and he said more than once that he found the story confusing. Throughout, he appeared to accept Olham's view that he was not a robot, and registered a "turnaround" only in the very last section. There was no indication that he was holding open alternative possibilities.

Carl was much more attuned to developments in "The Doll's House" and summed up both the social and the narrative forces at work in that story very well.

Carl provided a substantial contrast to Jenny. His strengths and hers were very different. It seemed possible that further information about his reading past might shed light on his predilection for the serious aspects of a story somewhat at the expense of the playful elements.

The Interview

Carl takes reading seriously. As soon as he started to be able to read, his parents encouraged him to read to them rather than the other way around, and as he became more proficient, they insisted that he must read half an hour a day. Looking back, he says he thinks this was a mistake:

> I didn't really like that too much, that kind of turned me off of reading as a result. . . . Kind of too much like a rule. Instead of making it something that I liked to do, it became something that was more like a chore.

He learned to read in Grade 1 but has no recollection of the process. Nor does he remember much of what was read aloud to him before that time. Nursery rhymes and Richard Scarry were the only two items that occurred to him. He had trouble remembering any titles:

> I can remember some of the books but I can't remember titles of them. . . . I liked, as a kid I liked books which involved cartoon characters that I was familiar with, Bugs Bunny . . . Sylvester the Cat, stuff like that.

During his elementary school years, when the reading rule was in force, Carl could recall reading Superfudge and a number of Beverly Cleary books. He liked Ramona. Asked why, he replied,

> I think it was just that, I don't know, she was kind of around the same age as I was when I was reading them and, like, they were kind of, I guess I could say that I could relate to that. Cause it's kind of just how she was mischievous and stuff like that. I kind of liked that. . . . I guess if someone said I reminded them of Ramona, I don't know, it would kind of be an insult but it would kind of be a compliment too, because she kind of had her own way and she didn't worry about too many other people, what they thought. She was kind of mischievous; I kind of liked that.

For a while Carl mainly read sports fiction:

> I would, I'd like to pick out novels that would have to do with sports a lot. I remember going to the library once in a while and those were really the only kind of books that I read around the Grade 6 level cause that was really all I was interested in. . . . And - I don't know, some of those books were okay, but they weren't really some of the better books that I've read. I remember them, not because they were probably best, good novels. . . but because I liked the topic that they dealt with.

Carl's two other main memories of elementary school reading are not very positive.

> I remember the readers that we did. . . . There was one, there was Whiskers and those kind of. . . . And they had workbooks to go with them. . . . At the time I didn't care for it cause I didn't really like reading class as such. . . . But, I don't know, I guess I can appreciate it now cause it did help me with my reading and stuff.

Carl was also supposed to take out a book a week from his school library.

> A lot of the time, though, I wouldn't get around to even reading the book, I would just - . Since we had it every week and they didn't really want us taking the book out for more than a week or two, they didn't really give you much time to read it since I wasn't really - .

The library was small which limited his choice further.

In the summer Carl's parents encouraged him to use the public library since he otherwise had little to do with books during the holiday.

Carl is the second of six children, but he does not appear to discuss books with his brothers and sisters at all. His older sister likes to read and reads a lot of Agatha Christie novels; and Carl is thinking of trying out some of those. He saw his younger sister a couple of months ago reading one of the Ramona books but it did not occur to him to talk to her about it. Although he finds class discussions of set novels interesting, he does not talk about reading voluntarily with anyone:

> No, I've never really talked about what I've read with anybody. I don't know, I guess, maybe it's just something that I didn't really have in common with other people or I don't know what it was. I've just never talked with any of my brothers or sisters about it; it just never came up, I guess. . . . Not with friends, either. I guess my friends don't really read too much either. . . . So we don't talk about it too much. I know that as I get older, reading becomes more, more a topic. . . . Like I know a lot of my friends are starting to read a lot more. . . . Not just because they have to either.

As well as not talking about reading, Carl does not share books with his friends: "I've never really asked a person if I could borrow their book to read. No."

Carl said that his attitude to reading changed significantly as a result of novel studies in junior high.

> I've always liked reading novels as a class cause you get to study little parts of it and I kind of like seeing how the authors develop certain things like symbolism and whatever.

He also likes the discussions. "I like seeing how different people respond and I like listening to their point of view."

He was enthusiastic about the choice of titles for class study: "I liked the books that the schools have chosen so far. I haven't really been disappointed by any of them."He commented positively on three titles in particular: David, To Kill a Mockingbird, and Watership Down which his class was reading at the time of the interview.

Carl now reads "probably close to three, four hours a week. That's just leisure reading, aside from homework and stuff." Much of this reading involves sports:

> Well, basically I like reading the newspaper in the morning, usually the sports section cause I'm really interested in sports. I like reading sports magazines and stuff like that.

He usually reads on the way to bed ("novels, magazines and stuff like that"). By his own perception, he reads more than he did when he was younger, and with more enthusiasm. However, all the fiction he mentioned in this part of the interview had been set in class; he does not appear to make much effort to find new fiction though he re-reads books he enjoyed in school.

Carl reads for a couple of reasons:

> For knowledge. I like to read for knowledge. Sometimes it's kind of a good way just to get away from everything, to sit down and read. People usually don't disturb you. If you just feel like being alone I like to read. . . . It's a good way just to get away from everybody. People seem to respect the fact that you're reading.

He is quite clear about what makes a good reader:

> Someone who can, I think someone who can see what the author's trying to get at. Often the author's trying to point out something but it's not blunt. . . . Something that's kind of hidden so if a reader can pick that up, I think he's a good reader.

He was a bit more tentative about whether he would describe himself as a good reader:

> When I get into a book. Sometimes I find that I read and I'm just kind of going through the motions kind of thing. . . . I don't really get a good grasp of what's happening, and sometimes when I do that I find myself going back and reading the section over again. . . . And I think to be a good reader you have to read when you want to, you can't really be forced to, it's hard to get into something when you really don't want to.

He agreed to a summary of this reaction, that he could be a good reader when all the circumstances were working in his favour.

Carl was more specific about what would make him want to read more:

> Something that excites you, I think. Every time you read something that you really enjoy, that just encourages you more to read. Likewise the other way too. If you read something and it's not really something that you've enjoyed, it kind of turns you off reading, I think, a little bit.

There is a consistent tone to a lot of this, almost a motif of duty being clear-cut while pleasure is debatable. However, Carl's account of his feelings at the end of a book are less ambiguous:

> Interviewer: What about when you finish reading a book that you've really enjoyed? What is your sensation as you put it down?

Carl: Mmm. Just basically knowing that you, that if you're inside the character's head like you said, you almost feel like you've been through the journey with the character, knowing how they, how they got through and finding out how everything happened, you know, like that.

Interviewer: Mmm hmm. Do you put down a book that you've enjoyed with regret, or with relief that you've got to the end, or with satisfaction that it's all worked out?

Carl: I think satisfaction that it's all worked out. I think when you're in the middle of a book and you put it down, you're always kind of pulled towards it to pick it up and read on.

That last sentence certainly sounds more like someone who has known the pleasure of being engrossed in a book than many of Carl's other remarks. However, the theme of reading being good for you returned with a vengeance when Carl was asked if reading had helped him to understand more about himself or about other people. He replied:

Mmm. It's helped me to understand about other people in that in those people that read a lot, I think you get to respect, respect reading a lot more, and therefore you respect those who read.

Carl analyzed his approach to reading as follows:

Interviewer: When you read a story, where are you in that story?

Carl: Usually right along with the main character, I would say.

Interviewer: Beside him?

Carl: Yeah.

Interviewer: Not in him?

Carl: I think it depends on the type of book. I guess, if there's a lot of characters you're kind of beside them all, but if there's one main character I guess I would be inside that main character.

Interviewer: Right. Does it make a difference how the book is written as well?

Carl: I don't think so, no. It's just the main idea, I would think.

Interviewer: So, say, a first person narrator...

Carl: Right.

Interviewer: Wouldn't make a difference to where you felt yourself to be?

Carl: Not really, no, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Okay. There's a second half to this question: When you read a story, where in that story is the author? Do you perceive the author as you read?

Carl: I feel the author's inside the main character too, especially when you're getting feedback from the main character as to what he's thinking.

The Page Ones

Carl's response to the different first pages was also somewhat contradictory. The main criterion for reading further which he elaborated explicitly was that books should be about people his own age, yet he was impressed by Cat's Eye and Pride and Prejudice. Again, he got himself tied up in misperceptions, so that of Practice Makes Perfect (a Sweet Dreams formula romance, which states flatly on page one that all the characters work for the high school newspaper), he observed:

> That one doesn't make me want to read on really. It just, I guess it kind of deals more with adults and it's kind of hard for someone younger to appreciate the fact of a job and stuff like that.

He missed the formula cues of the Sweet Valley book, which so irritated Jenny, and commented,

> Yeah, I like that one too. It seems like it's the same age level as me and talking about twins. From other books that I've read, twins can get into trouble and how they can manipulate and stuff like that, I found really good. Probably not, maybe not my age level, maybe a little younger.

(When the title was identified, he said he had heard of the series and thought his little sisters were reading it.)

"Relating" to books and characters was important to Carl in this exercise. Of Matilda he said:

> I think that would be good too. I'd keep reading cause it's probably about us as kids. Anything that you can relate to personally, I think, is kind of good to read. I think a person younger could read that and probably an adult could read that too because it talks about how they can put up with a lot of things too.

(It may be worth noticing that, like Jenny, Carl made no mention of any humour in this extract.)

Similarly, he liked The Silver Chair:

> I think it would be good because you can relate to it. Now as well as when I was younger because it talks about how kids are bullying someone else around and I think that happens throughout life, people are excluded from certain activities and

> how they're kind of put up on a, they point them out and show how they're not equal, kind of exclude them.

And again, with Pardon Me, You're Stepping on my Eyeball:

> I like that one. It sounds something like the boy has almost a problem in that he's developed to hate school. I think that story will probably develop into something how he comes to appreciate it or learns to like it a little more. I think anyone could kind of relate to that, younger or older.

The other criterion that appeared to appeal to Carl was some suggestion of mystery. He liked The Winking Ruby Mystery: "I think I'd like to read that one. The suggestion of a mystery is kind of intriguing, making you want to find out what it's all about." He also liked Exiles of Colsec:

> Yeah, I liked to see that one. That would be good for my age level, I think. It kind of describes the tomb and some bodies in it, it seems like something's going to happen. It describes a gloomy mood. I kind of like that; I'd like to read that.

The Dark Tower appealed for the same reason:

> I kind of like that one. There's something, there's something mysterious about it, I guess, something you want to find out about it. You want to find out what it's all about.

Opening with a setting or a description of characters did not appeal to Carl at all. He rejected The Outsiders, Bleak House, and The Songlines for this reason. Yet he expressed some enthusiasm for Mary Poppins for reasons which may seem anomalous:

> That one too I think I like. I like the suggestion that someone's looking for directions into a town. I like the type of books that take place in a town - I guess Anne of Green Gables is something like that. I'd like to keep on reading that.

Going through the titles with Carl, after he had read all the first pages, was illuminating only in a negative way. He recognised almost none of the authors. Mention of Carolyn Keene led to the Hardy Boys and he claimed to have read and liked them. He also said he had read Charlie and the Chocolate Factory but had nothing to say about it. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe raised some recognition but he said, "I think it was just, yeah, I think it was just that one. . . . I think I liked it. I don't remember what it was about though. I don't remember anything about it."

Carl had heard of Stephen King but never read any of his books. Asked if he ever read horror stories, he said, "I, like, yeah, I have, I've read one, one or two by Agatha Christie. I like just the mysteries and stuff like that."

Carl had also heard of Margaret Atwood and said he had read The Handmaid's Tale and seen the movie.

Otherwise, the list of titles and authors drew a complete blank. Unlike some of the other participants he had not read Hinton or Zindel in class and had not come across them on his own.

One striking element of all of Carl's reactions was his apparent indifference to the gender of the protagonists. Two characters he mentioned voluntarily were Ramona and Anne of Green Gables. The appeal of the twins motif in Keeping Secrets did not seem diminished by the fact that Jessica and Elizabeth are girls, nor did he seem concerned about the gender of the Dana girls in The Winking Ruby Mystery. His explicit remarks bear this out.

> Interviewer: There's a, almost rule of thumb amongst teachers and librarians and people who deal with books for kids, that girls will read about boys but boys won't read about girls. Now you talked about Ramona, you threw in a mention about Anne of Green Gables. Are you saying that you don't care whether you read about boys or girls? Do you prefer to read about one or the other?
>
> Carl: I don't think it makes a difference really. I think it's just more the plot and how action develops and things that go on in the story, not whether it's about a girl or a boy. I don't really think that has much, any difference.
>
> Interviewer: So you wouldn't, you wouldn't worry when you picked up a book.
>
> Carl: No.
>
> Interviewer: Was there ever a point when you would look for a book about boys in preference?
>
> Carl: No. Not really. I don't think - I read about boys and girls both, just as much.
>
> Interviewer: Right. So you challenge the received wisdom then.
>
> Carl: Yeah. I think that's kind of just, probably a lot of that too is in school, like some of the novels that we've read, we've had novels with both boys and girls.
>
> Interviewer: Right.
>
> Carl: David and To Kill a Mockingbird and stuff.
>
> Interviewer: Would you observe of your classmates that any of the boys have this prejudice that they would rather read about boys? Is there anything to this line?

Carl: Maybe, maybe some of the kids might prefer to read about guys and some about girls.

Interviewer: Right.

Carl: But I don't really think that it makes much difference. I don't think there would be a lot that would have a preference to that. I think it's just more that they're interested in the story.

Again and again, when Carl referred to his reading experience, he relied on books selected for him in English classes. The contrast with Jenny, who was disdainful about school choices, is extreme.

LINDA

The Readings

Linda found the title "Impostor" suggested mystery to her, and said it brought the movie "Changeling" to mind, "when things aren't always what they seem."

Even by the end of section 1, Linda was at ease in the story, garnering details to support an analysis of what possibilities the story might offer.

Interviewer: Okay. What did you think was worth noticing in Section 1?

Linda: Well, definitely it's in the future. The Outspacers are probably aliens or a band of rebels of some sort. I think they're probably living on a different planet because of the reference of being all the way back to Terra which is, I think, Earth. The war is between the Outspacers and the humans. I can't really determine who the impostor is yet but it could be any one of the three characters mentioned. I think it's hinting towards the leader, Major Peters, but I'm not sure.

Interviewer: What do you think you might expect from the rest of the story on that little bit?

Linda: Probably Major Peters' role would, we'll be told of it, and what kind of work he was doing. More on the war and who the impostor is.

Interviewer: And do you have anything to rethink of what your original reaction to the title was?

Linda: I think the mystery is still there. Here you get the "foreshadowing" (smiles) that things aren't going to be what they seem. Obviously somebody is, is acting out a different life. I can't remember what else I said.

Interviewer: That was basically it, mystery and things not being what they seem. So you're pretty well on track?

Linda: Yeah.

Early on in her reading, Linda suspected Nelson of being the guilty party:

Olham has been arrested but I think with his confusion it's obvious to me that he's been framed and with Nelson's - he seems very uncomfortable; I think he's probably the spy. He just wants to get the blame as far away from him as possible.

As she read on, she began to wonder:

Olham is still very adamant that he's innocent but it sort of plants some seeds of doubt in my mind whether he is truly innocent or not because with that high technology, anything's possible. Even though still I feel that Nelson could be the one.

By the end of section 4, she had dismissed Nelson through a line of elaborate reasoning:

> If Nelson is the robot he is very intelligent because if he would have said, you know, when Olham said they were wrong about the phrase, Nelson would have known if he was the robot that that wasn't quite true. So maybe it's not any one of them, or they're very very smart.

Similarly, Linda analyzed Mary's role. At the end of section 4, she said:

> I think if this was all top secret, that if things would have been normal Mary wouldn't have been let know what had happened to her husband, and so with her surprise, it sort of incriminates her, that she's surprised he's still alive.

After section 5, however, she reconsidered.

> Well, that Mary - I was probably off-line on that, Mary probably isn't involved in this at all. And it comes back to me that maybe nobody is the robot. The robot could be very well lying out there somewhere, destroyed, and this is just a whole big mix-up and he's running for his life, trying to prove something to people who won't listen to him. Then again, he could be the robot, I think.

Linda preserved this open-mindedness about possible endings to the story right up to the end of section 8. After section 4, asked what she expected from the rest of the story she replied, "The unexpected, I guess."

Linda also expressed awareness of the constructed nature of the story. In addition to her mention of "foreshadowing" which she treated as a formal, almost alien term, she showed her alertness to the shaping of the story when asked about what was worth noticing in section 7: "Well, it sort of tells me why Sutton Wood was mentioned earlier in the story."

As Linda put down the last section of "Impostor," she said, "Cool!" She added,

> That was neat. . . . I really like it, I like things that are unexpected. I like not being able to figure things out till the very end. But I hate it when stories leave you hanging. . . . It was a really good story.

Linda's reaction to the title, "The Doll's House," was not one of genre. It suggested, "that rather than being a plaything it's a possession of the dolls. Maybe they're alive in some sense. It's their house instead of the little girl's toy." By the end of section 1 she had revised this idea: "Maybe it's not about the dolls at all, maybe it's about the lamp."

In section 1, Linda showed both an engagement with the story and an awareness of the structure. "It's a great doll house," she said, laughing. "I never had anything like that myself." And she observed, "Obviously the singling out of the lamp has some significance. The lamp was more real than anything in the doll house. It had a place there; it belonged."

Linda sorted out the Burnell sisters:

> Isabel is obviously the popular one out of the three girls and most in control sort of thing. Kezia is the most charitable one out of the Burnells and, I don't know, sort

> of soft in her - . She's the one who picked out the lamp and made it seem so real. She seems like a dreamer, a romantic, and she would rather include everyone and make everyone feel good. . . . That feeling is quickly put out of her head by her snobbish mother.

Again in section 4, Linda combined an attention to the specific composition of the story with a linkage to her own experience. She commented with a smile,

> Well, like all little kids are, they're mean and nasty because they have to put other people down to make themselves feel good. I suppose that's the same way it is with teenagers too, isn't it?

But she also backed up her impressions with direct quotation:

> They're filled with joy at being so mean, that sort of thing, and by their, "They never did skip so high, run in and out so fast or do such daring things on that morning," that sort of tells me that they're all around thinking they're so mature and so grown up because they're able to be snobs just like their families.

Alone of the ten participants, Linda retained the pages of the story and referred to them as she answered. Most of the others put the pages down and answered from memory; one or two hesitated occasionally and were encouraged to look back. Linda assumed that answering questions would require reference to the text.

At the end of section 5, the second-last section, Linda was still keeping an eye on the idea of the lamp: "I still think that the lamp has some special significance since it's important to Kezia and maybe she'll give that up for them, give that to them."

By the end, Linda was satisfied with the working out of the story. She smiled as she finished reading.

> Interviewer: What's worth noticing in section 6 then?

> Linda: That Aunt Beryl is a bit of a hag. She also feels better by putting people down; her heart feels lighter after she's given Kezia a good scolding. That the Kelveys even to go through the humiliation of being kicked out of the Burnells' house, the most important thing is they got to see the house and they got to see the little lamp. And I think they see the same significance in the little lamp that Kezia does.

> Interviewer: What's your reaction to the story as a whole?

> Linda: I think it's, it's kind of a sad story in the way that there's that much prejudice but at the end it gives, it gives you a little hope - things might change.

> Interviewer: What about the lamp? Did you wind up finding that as significant as you thought you would?

> Linda: Yes, because when Kezia said at the beginning it seemed like it belonged there, it lived there, it could be a symbol of life and a symbol of hope; it could carry the Kelveys especially through the hard times of trying to be accepted.
>
> Asked which story she preferred, Linda answered, "Depends what mood I'm in."

Choosing Linda

Linda was an intelligent reader. She submerged herself completely in the story, working out elaborate explanations of her decisions about the direction of the plot. She quoted from the text to back up her assessment of the evidence, which was unusual among this group of readers. She worked successfully with both very different stories. She involved herself in a wide range of predictions, moving back and forth between the evidence in her hands and possible different ways of interpreting it. She canvassed a range of possibilities in "Impostor": Nelson might be the robot, Mary might be involved, maybe nobody at all was the robot, Peters and Nelson might be looking for someone to incriminate, Nelson probably wasn't involved after all. Maintaining and dropping different possibilities clearly intrigued her.

More than any other reader, Linda supplied hints of personal engagement. She said, "Cool! That was neat!" as she finished "Impostor" and commented, "It's a great doll house. I never had anything like that myself." This is not remarkable, except when compared to the rest of the group who did not appear to make links with their own lives, at least not aloud. Of all the readers, she was the one who gave most signs of simple enjoyment as she read, and this alone was enough to qualify her for further investigation.

The Interview

Linda's interview was somewhat shorter than the rest, because of a combination of external circumstances. This was partially compensated for by the fact that she was by far the fastest reader and time was gained on the page ones.

Linda made one unqualified statement that was unique in this little group: she loves to read. Asked why she reads, she said,

> I suppose it's more exciting than real life and it's, it's good for me not to watch TV, not watch movies all the time. It's certainly enhancing the person I am with the knowledge I get out of reading. . . . And I just, I love it.

This love of reading goes back a long way. Linda was read to every night, and her special favourites were Dr. Seuss books which she wanted over and over again. Her parents and her Grade 1 teacher all participated in teaching her to read, and her Grade 1 teacher instilled a love of reading in her, "and I'm really grateful for that." She liked the I Can Read books and has a clear memory of one of the first chapter books she ever read on her own:

> There was one book, I don't remember the name, it was, the cover was a blue, a blue dragon, and it was Something Island. I don't remember the name but I really liked that book.

As soon as she could read, Linda read for pleasure. By Grade 4, she was testing at a Grade 12 reading level.

Linda has an older brother and sister and she read their books as well as going regularly to the library. Some titles she remembers from elementary school are the Narnia books (her favourites to this day), Nancy Drew, Little House on the Prairie, Anne of Green Gables, and books by Judy Blume. She had a school library and the school also provided a book ordering club. The school library did not supply enough variety so Linda started to go to the library on her own, to pick out her own books. She found the range of books at the local branch of the public library to be adequate but complained about the perfunctory organization of the paperback titles: "I found it quite difficult to find a lot of books that I liked, picking them off the paperback things."

During elementary school, Linda also swapped books with her friends, exchanged titles, and talked about books. However, it was not all straightforward and she laughed as she talked about how reading sometimes complicated her relationships with others:

> I found with my swimming, when I was competing in synchronised swimming, I competed for eight years. I was always the bookworm, I always had a book. People were hiding them from me because I would never do anything without sitting and reading.

Nowadays, Linda has few reading friends so the days of exchange seem to be over. Linda also is less happy about her own reading habits these days. Although she still reads a range of fiction, and at the time of the interview she was actually reading a Narnia book, she spends too much time on what she considers to be trash. She referred to this three or four times and was clearly disturbed about why she was so caught up with "trashy smut." Asked to explain what she meant, she did not give an example but said instead,

> Escapism and things that take absolutely no, or relatively no work to read. It's not taxing at all, you don't have to think about what you're reading, you just sort of get absorbed in the book, sort of thing like that.

There is a limit to how many of these books Linda can read in a row:

> I get tired of them quickly. But it still takes me a while to get tired of them - and I get disgusted with myself when I read books like that - like, why are you wasting yourself on them?

Linda is clearly discontented with her own life and proffers that as a tentative explanation of how she became gripped by these books that she finds unworthy of herself.In her preliminary notes, she wrote,

> About two and a half years ago I started reading trashy books, but I've been trying to get out of that. I don't know why - maybe the lack of romance in my own life made me seek it elsewhere.

Many remarks in her interview confirmed that impression. She re-reads, she says for "enjoyment. Wishing I could be there instead of here." She doesn't like reading books about high school. She was struck by page 1 of The Changeover because, "I always wanted to be, want to be in another life, in another place, I suppose. I find something in common with her." She appears to feel restless about what her own life offers at the moment, but is clearly dissatisfied with escapist reading as a solution.

Given an adequate choice, Linda would read fantasy. "I like other worlds and magical creatures and things like that." She also likes horror books, mentioning John Saul, Stephen King and Peter Straub; but she is defensive about them as well: "I like horror books which are kind of trashy also." She reads them because she likes to scare herself. She laughed as she acknowledged that sometimes she wishes she hadn't:

> Interviewer: Does it ever bother you? Do you ever wish you hadn't?
>
> Linda: Yes. (laughs) When I read a particularly good one, yes it does.
>
> Interviewer: So the better they are, the more likely they are to haunt you.
>
> Linda: Yeah.
>
> Interviewer: But you still carry on reading them.
>
> Linda: Oh, of course. (laughs)

Linda says the most interesting book she has ever read is Weave World by Clive Barker - also a fantasy.

The time that Linda spends reading depends on what books she has available. After a trip to the library, she reads constantly until the books are all finished. Trips to the library, however, fluctuate according to the health of her library card. At the moment she is avoiding the library because she owes $12 in fines.

As a reader, Linda engages thoroughly with the story:

Interviewer: When you read a story, where are you in that story?

Linda: I'm in there. I'm with the story. I'm living it.

Interviewer: Are you one of the characters in the story or are you just sort of in amongst them but not of them?

Linda: I'm watching everything.

Interviewer: But you're watching from the inside?

Linda: Yeah. I'm an observer.

Interviewer: Are you an observer from a distance or in the thick of it or just peering over other people's shoulders or...?

Linda: I'm usually right in there.

Interviewer: Somebody has described the reader in the story as a dark shadow. Can you understand what that means?

Linda: Yes. You're there with everything. You can't be seen but you see everything.

Interviewer: You can't affect anything.

Linda: Right. But you're living with it.(?)

Interviewer: Okay. When you read a story where in that story is the author?

Linda: The author?

Interviewer: Mmm.

Linda: I don't see them at all. They're telling the story, they're explaining, they're, they're, they're weaving it.

Interviewer: Mmm.

Linda: It's sort of like a play. The playwright creates the world but you live in it.

Linda re-reads a great deal and finds that she can take up the perspective of someone besides the hero or heroine if she is reading for a second time. Sometimes, however, "if I get caught up in the book, I, I forget and I, and I still have a nice surprise."

She doesn't re-read thrillers or horror stories unless she has thoroughly forgotten them.

At the end of a book,

> I'm sorry that I've come to the end because I have to come back to real life but I usually put it up on the shelf and make myself wait until I feel like reading it again. It's basically over. I don't, I don't try and make my own world.

Linda doesn't work out alternative endings. "I'm not a writer. I just read." She is, however, infuriated when she is left hanging. "I really dislike those. (laughs) I always usually like to have everything, you know, happen, it's over with, it's finished."

Linda is emphatic that reading has helped her to understand more:

> It's given me a lot of insight, I think, into different ways people react to different situations just because of all the different characters that I've encountered in my reading. . . . And it's given me a lot of ideas how to deal with different situations for myself. Just on the basis of what happens to that character if they make the wrong decision.

The Page Ones

Linda had no hesitation in making her mind up about continuing or abandoning the different books represented by first pages. Five Run Away Together and The Winking Ruby Mystery she immediately classified together. She said of the first,

> Sounds like a Nancy Drew book. I probably would have read it when I was about 11 and I probably would read it now if I was hard up enough or feeling nostalgic or something.

Of the second, she simply replied, "Same as before." She liked Mary Poppins: "The way it's written sounds appealing to me, I don't know why." She laughed at Matilda and said she would read it "because it's true." She recognised The Silver Chair, of course, and approved of King Arthur: The Sword from the Lake: "I like medieval sort of books."

She also recognised Gordon Korman, and rejected the two series books: "I don't like reading books about high schools. . . . It's, it's too, I don't know, too Sweet Valley Highish, I suppose." However, the Paul Zindel book which comes between them on the list made her retract some of her blanket rejection: "Well, maybe I'll have to rephrase that. I'd read this one and it's about high school."

Of the remaining books on the list, Linda hesitated only over Pride and Prejudice: "I don't know if I'd read this one or not. It would depend if it got a little more exciting than this kind of thing." All the rest she said she would read, though she did observe of Bleak House: "I'd read this but I don't know why."

As a result of the time constraint, the revelation of the titles of the page ones was hasty. Linda, however, had identified most of the genre fiction and declared her opinions; and about the titles that were not genre writing she was relatively positive, so there was perhaps less to be gained from this procedure than in some other cases. It is worth noting that she was not familiar with Zindel or Hinton, two authors fairly widely known as writers for adolescents. She was enthusiastic about Dahl, particularly about The BFG. She likes mythology which ties in with her taste for fantasy and books about other lands and cultures. In short, there were no surprises in the final stages of the conversation.

Of the four students chosen for the follow-up interviews, Linda was without doubt the most intense and enthusiastic reader. It is fascinating, therefore, to note that she was the one who expressed the most unease about reading as an occupation. The other three considered it worthwhile and valuable even if they rationed their own activity. Linda reads constantly, and considers that reading is "enhancing the person I am;" but she indicated more than once that she thinks a lot of what she reads is demoralising, if not actively damaging ("I get disgusted with myself when I read books like that - like, why are you wasting yourself on them?"). How this relates to her dissatisfaction with other elements of her life is not for a study like this to develop; on the basis of the information gathered to speculate would be an impertinent intrusion and most likely wrong as well. However, it is another reminder that reading is a complex social, intellectual and emotional activity, and not simply and simplistically A Good Thing.

DEREK

The Readings

Derek was the only reader who gave an interpretation involving genre to both titles. "Impostor" suggested "almost a detective sort of thing. . . . Probably sort of dark." "The Doll's House" made him think of horror.

Reading the first section of "Impostor," Derek noted the future setting, but he shed his early reaction quite readily as he talked about section 2.

> I was mistaken, I think, in the type of story I thought it was. I thought it would be more of a science fiction story dealing with the actual project but it's also got a bit of espionage in it. It's a little different than I thought it would be.

Once the idea of the robot was introduced, Derek generally predicted that Olham would indeed turn out to be the robot, whatever Olham thought himself. Asked after section 3 (where the issue of whether Olham is the robot is introduced) if there was anything he wanted to reconsider, he said, "Yeah, well, it was just interesting to see that this actually could be a robot. The way this story was written sort of seems to pertain to him being a human being."

Only briefly in section 7 did Derek waver in his assessment of Olham's inhuman status: "I'm starting to have my doubts about him actually being a robot." But by section 8, he was back to his original idea:

> Derek: I'm not sure what that little box is but I don't think it's the bomb they were looking for.
>
> Interviewer: Why do you think that?
>
> Derek: I think that he actually might still be the robot. I don't know why but I still have that feeling. (laughs)
>
> Interviewer: Completely given up on your doubts?
>
> Derek: Mmm? Well, no, I haven't, but I tend to lean more to this idea of him being a robot still.

Pressed at the end of the story about what had roused his suspicions, Derek was vague:

> Derek: I don't know. Just something about the way the story was written.
>
> Interviewer: So it was something you thought the author was doing?

> Derek: Yeah, yeah. Just by the way he was writing it and certain things he was mentioning that maybe he wouldn't have mentioned if he wasn't.

He liked "Impostor." "It had a lot of switches in it and it kept you on your feet. . . . It was really cleverly written."

By the end of section 1 of "The Doll's House," Derek had retracted his suggestion that it might be a horror story. He observed,

> It's very descriptive about the doll house and there seemed to be some sort of tie to the lamp. I think it'll play a major part in the story. And it sort of set the scene. It's a rural type of scene, I think. It probably took place during the 30s or 40s.

At this stage, Derek was predicting dramatic developments in the plot: "The child will develop a real close tie with the doll house. And maybe it'll be destroyed or something later on and she'll have to deal with that." By section 2, he was revising his opinion of the time of the setting, putting it at the turn of the century. By section 3, he was altering his prediction about the destruction of the doll house:

> I said earlier that the doll house will be destroyed but I don't think that's going to happen. . . . I think, I still think that Kezia will probably give the lamp to one of the Kelvey children.

He continued, however, to predict dramatic developments, but also continued to be flexible about abandoning what did not work out. In section 4, he suggested: "I think something terrible is going to happen to one of the Kelvey kids. Probably one of them will die or something." But by section 5, he was revising again:

> I'm not so sure that one of the Kelvey kids is going to die any more. I think that they'll become a more accepted part of the community now because of Kezia's accepting of them.

Possibly with that last prediction in mind, Derek found the ending of the story optimistic: "At the end, the lamp was more of a symbol than an actual object. It symbolised that she was a lamp to the people; she was a ray of hope to the Kelveys." His reaction to the story as a whole was as follows: "It's a nice story. Sort of slow moving and lazy but a nice cheery little story."

Other readers might argue with this assessment. Derek's interpretation of the characters is probably closer to a standard reading of the story. Kezia, said Derek, "seems to be more a quiet type, more of a thinker, and Isabel is more of a leader but a follower at the same time. She does what people think is right." The Kelveys, he observed, don't seem

to mind too much when the other children are cruel to them, "they sort of accept who they are."

Although Derek called the ending optimistic, he was able to reply to a question drawing out the bleaker aspects of the story:

> Interviewer: I just have one more question. It comes out of your anticipation that it would be a horror story. Do you think there's any way that you could look at this story, complete, having read the whole thing, and say, yes there's a certain little bit of justice in saying that there's going to be an element of horror in it?
>
> Derek: Yeah, there is, there's the horror of seeing the way society can treat people.
>
> Interviewer: But that wasn't what you had in mind when you suggested it?
>
> Derek: No, no, I think that came from a lot of recent movies that have been let out.

Derek said he liked the story. It "paints a good picture." He commented that there was lots of symbolism and description.

Altogether Derek brought together many elements of reading with his interpretation of these two stories. He took account of how the story was written. He was sensitive to nuances of character. He was flexible about his own predictions and very ready to say, "I was wrong when I expected that."

Choosing Derek

Derek was a subtle and responsive reader. He was one of the more articulate in summing up crucial ingredients of the sections as he read them. He reacted to "Impostor" by noting the hand of the author at work and used this insight to make an accurate prediction of the shape the story would take. He raised details of plot and noted elements of theme, commenting on the hollow nature of the friendship between Nelson and Olham and the effects of the war on people's ideas. With "The Doll's House," he did a good job of summing up incidents and characters and weighing their importance for the story as a whole. His judgement of Isabel ("Isabel is more of a leader but a follower at the same time. She does what people think is right.") was both mature and succinct. He adduced evidence to back up his assertions, was not afraid to change his mind but also not afraid to hold to his opinion if he thought the author was trying to trick him. Thus, he stuck to the suggestion that Olham would turn out to be the robot for nearly all of "Impostor" and wavered slightly only once; but he altered his assessments of "The Doll's House" without hesitation when the

text appeared to him to show that he had been mistaken. He showed awareness of the author at work and gave every appearance of being happy, as a reader, to cooperate with that author.

The Interview

Derek's interview was the biggest surprise of the whole study. Although his readings were thoughtful and perceptive, he actually reads very little indeed. He does not actively dislike reading; he just has many things to do which he likes better. Asked if he considered himself a good reader, his reply confirmed this impression: "I think I'm a good reader but not really a reader."

As a small child, Derek was read to occasionally, "every once in a while." He liked Dr. Seuss Books. He cannot remember anything about learning to read and assumes he learned at school. He recalls the Mr. Muggs books that he read as a new reader, primers involving a dog and his family. He did not like them as much as the books he had at home. The pronouns in the reason he gave for this almost baffle interpretation:

> I think they were more educational than the ones I had at home. (laughs) They didn't produce these big new words and weren't as much work. They were more work.

A cautious interpretation would be that the first and third sentences refer to the school books and the second sentence refers to the home books. At home Derek continued with Dr. Seuss and read some Little Golden Books, such as The Little Engine that Could.

As Derek grew older and turned to chapter books, his reading diminished:

> A lot of my friends did a lot more reading than I did. . . . They used to read a book a week type of thing, but I maybe read two books a year. (laughs) I'm not a very avid reader.

Derek is second youngest in a family of four and his house contained books such as the Hardy Boys which apparently belonged to his brother. His brother claimed ownership of these and Derek never bothered to challenge him - and as a result has never read any Hardy Boy books. Very occasionally he would get a book as a present:

> Every once in a while I'd be given a book. I didn't read that often so I didn't get many; I got lots of records and pop-out books and things like that. Not many serious reading books.

In Grade 6 Derek belonged to the library club at school, but their main job was to shelve books rather than read them. He occasionally went to the public library but not very often.

Also in Grade 6, Derek decided to "try and challenge myself." He read all of Huckleberry Finn and attempted to read Moby Dick. Huck Finn made little sense to him the first time through and he read it again a couple of years later and understood it much better. At this point, he says he started reading more informational books, which he defined as "National Geographic and things like that."

Asked what prompted him to take on the challenge of Huckleberry Finn, Derek tried to remember:

> It was just, I don't know, my interests changed a little. . . . I was becoming more interested in my own education at that time. . . . I was enjoying school more, so I was probably beginning to enjoy my learning a little more.

At some time during this period, Derek's cousin attempted to convert him to the pleasures of reading:

> There's a cousin of mine that lives across the street and she's a very avid reader. She used to be the one book a week type of thing. And she used to invite me over for readathons or whatever but I'd usually fall asleep. (laughs) She'd talk about her reading to me and we used to play character roles. I've always sort of done more creating in my mind than actual reading.

However, despite these flashes, it does not seem as if Derek makes any real effort to engage in continuous reading. He describes his reading now as follows:

> I read what I have to in school and I maybe read one book in my spare time during the year type of thing. At night I like to read National Geographic but I usually don't read whole articles, just the words that are under the pictures. . . . [The summer is] usually when I read my one book a year. . . . I just grab whatever I can find. Lately I've been reading a lot of the condensed Reader's Digest books. . . . I just throw one in the car and pick whatever catches my eye.

Asked to name the last book he had read voluntarily, Derek was stumped.

> Hmm. What was it? (laughs) It was one of those Reader's Digest ones anyway. I used to have to do a book report a month in my Grade 9 language arts class. . . . And I used to read the condensed ones so I didn't have to read so much. (laughs)"

Yet Derek still seems to have the occasional spasm of interest in reading. Although he disliked the first page of Bleak House when shown it, he did express some enthusiasm for Charles Dickens when the book was identified:

> I think that's the last book I read was, I tried to read one of Charles Dickens' books but I had to give it back. It was, what was it, it started out with the young boy in the

graveyard. . . . That's what I just started reading. I had to give the book back before I finished it. . . . It was my future brother-in-law's book. . . . I really love Dickens and the great description he gives of his characters. They're so colourful. I like a colourful character.

In general, though, he seems satisfied to fulfil school requirements and let it go at that. He has "mostly enjoyed" the books he has had to read for school - about three in an average school year - and considers that he has built up a reasonable background just through compulsory reading.

Certainly Derek has read enough for him to have no hesitation in describing a good reader or in placing himself within the story:

Interviewer: What makes a good reader? Just in your opinion.

Derek: Trying to understand every aspect. A lot of people I know read through things but they don't really bother to sit there and figure things out if it doesn't come to them immediately.

Interviewer: Mmm hmm.

Derek: And I think, picturing what you're reading in your mind is really helpful. Sort of watching the play go by as you read.

Interviewer: That's how you read, is it? You're sort of one side of the, the arch...

Derek: Yeah.

Interviewer: And the play is on the other side?

Derek: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: You're not actually in, inside the characters?

Derek: Unless - well, it depends on the character. (laughs) If it's really high action, I like to be inside.

Interviewer: Mmm.

Derek: Yeah.

Interviewer: But mostly you're on the other side of the footlights.

Derek: Yeah. Watching.

Later a related issue arose.

Interviewer: The second part of this is: Where in the story, when you're reading it, is the author? Do you have any place in the story for the author when you're reading?

Derek: No. The author is usually completely outside. Sometimes I try to gain an insight into the type of person he is.

Interviewer: Mmm.

Derek: Sometimes I applaud the way he writes, but he's not actually a part of the story.

Interviewer: Right.

Derek: Unless it's been written that way.

Interviewer: You mean, where he puts himself in?

Derek: Yeah. Where's he's speaking in the first person.

Derek was illuminating on why he does read, on the rare occasion that he does.

Interviewer: What is it that makes you read?

Derek: Boredom, I think. Or if I'm actually looking for information, I like to find as much as I can and read all about it.

Interviewer: So if you were looking for information, you'd look out more than one source to try to find out.

Derek: Yeah.

Interviewer: You wouldn't just say, Right, I've got it.

Derek: Mmm hmm.

Interviewer: So you have a slightly different attitude to information than you do to your book reports where the fastest route possible - . (laughs)

Derek: Yeah, yeah. Well, with a book report, it's sort of, once you've read the book then you've got all the information.

Interviewer: Right.

Derek: But if I'm researching a certain topic, then there's so many different sources to go to.

Yet even this more comprehensive approach to reading non-fiction appears to be confined to school work for the most part. Derek describes himself as "not really picky," and

he seems prepared to read about whatever is assigned without any great sign of preference for one topic over another: "So it doesn't really matter what I have to read."

Perhaps it is not surprising that Derek does not re-read very much; he observes,

> There's not that much more new information I seem to be able to get out of it. I like to read carefully the first time. . . . I don't read faster when I get excited very much. . . . But I sometimes do go back if I don't understand a paragraph.

Very occasionally, Derek will continue to ponder something he has read: "Sometimes I like to continue the play in my mind for a while. . . . And then sometimes, weeks later or whatever, I recall certain things about it that happened." But this is unusual.

The Page Ones

Derek's response to the page ones was catholic. He didn't express a great deal of enthusiasm but he only rejected one story outright: The Silver Chair: "I don't really like the personal type of story as much. This is probably the type of book I'd be forced to read in school." Similarly, only once did he say he would "definitely" read further, and that was with The Dark Tower:

> I've always been a bit of an armchair cowboy I guess. (laughs). . . . I don't read many [westerns]. I like to go camping and do things like that. . . . And sort of the romance of carrying a gun and wearing a hat.

He was unperturbed to learn that the story is not actually set in the Old West.

Otherwise, the most remarkable thing about Derek's reaction to the page ones was, not a lack of discrimination but a lack of strong feeling. He sometimes remarked that he would have been more likely to read a book in the past than now, but even when he came close to rejecting a book, he was not vehement about it. Of Mary Poppins, for example, he said, "I'd probably read on. I wouldn't be as inclined as I would for the others." Of Practice Makes Perfect, he said, "I might read on. I read stories like that quite a bit in Grade 6. I've never found high school stories to be that interesting." Reading Bleak House, he said, "I'd probably read on but I'd be sort of wary because I don't really like his style very much." Asked to elaborate, he said, "The way he constantly lists. He's always listing his descriptions and I really like description but you can get too much of it and it becomes sort of garbled."

Similarly, his preferences were only moderate. He liked The Dark Tower and he also liked Exiles of Colsec, saying he would expect "sort of a futuristic type of dark story," and adding, "I like the futuristic a little more. But anything a little dreary gets me excited too.

(laughs)" King Arthur: The Sword from the Lake also appealed to him; he liked, "the fact that it's in sort of an exotic locale and a different time than what I'm used to."

Derek recognised The Outsiders as a book he had read for school. He had liked it but not enough to look for anything else by S.E. Hinton: "I don't usually chase down authors." He also recognised the name of Paul Zindel, having read The Pigman.

Derek's reaction to the revelation of the titles was interesting. Most of the time, he had some point of contact with the author or the book even if he had not read the book. He did not recognise Enid Blyton but his sister owns books by Carolyn Keene (which Derek has never read) and, like everybody else, he had seen the movie of Mary Poppins. He thinks he may have written an essay on Roald Dahl and perhaps read some of his poems. The Narnia title struck a deeper chord: "I remember trying to get my hands on the whole series once but I only read The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. . . . I really liked it."

King Arthur and Gordon Korman both passed him by, but he knew the Sweet Dreams logo: "I remember the girls reading a lot of that. I used to try and find them dirty scenes. (laughs)" Similarly, when the Sweet Valley home of the twins was revealed he was familiar with them.

Interviewer: The Sweet Valley Twins.

Derek: Oh! Yeah, the girls used to read those too.

Interviewer: Yeah. You didn't read them enough even to pick up Jessica and Elizabeth?

Derek: Well, I did, I recognise Jessica and Elizabeth now but - .

Interviewer: Right. You were not touched enough by them to remember them all these years.

Derek: No. No. I used to sit on the bus and read theirs. Just a few pages.

Interviewer: You weren't ever taken enough by Jessica and Elizabeth to read on, then?

Derek: No!

Derek knew nothing of Margaret Mahy but did, not surprisingly, react to the name of Stephen King: "I've always meant to [read something by King] but I've never got my hands on his books."

Chatwin meant nothing to Derek, but he recognised the name of Atwood. On hearing that Cat's Eye was not about time travel as he had supposed, but was about someone looking into her past and trying to integrate her past into her present self, he said, "Well, then, I probably wouldn't read it."

Jane Austen's name registered with him as well: "I saw part of the movie and I, my sister did it in university so I had to type up her essay (laughs). . . . She didn't like it very much so I never bothered to pick it up."

In fact, Derek's degree of low-level, background awareness of titles and authors was considerably greater than might be expected, given how little he appears to have actually read.

Derek was consistent throughout about his lack of real enthusiasm for reading. Pressed one more time at the end of the interview, he responded as follows:

> Interviewer: But you don't ever see a time in your past when you thought of yourself as a reader particularly?
>
> Derek: No, I, my cousin tried to turn me into a reader.
>
> Interviewer: Yeah.
>
> Derek: But I never really got into it.
>
> Interviewer: Do you ever see yourself getting to the point where you might drift into it more because you enjoy it enough to think of spending more time at it?
>
> Derek: No. I'm really busy. (laughs)
>
> Interviewer: Yes.
>
> Derek: Extremely busy. I've got a lot of extra-curricular activities going on and I like to work with my hands more than with my brain in my spare time. (laughs)
>
> Interviewer: Suppose you were, well, let's picture the worst here, suppose you were sick for a long time. Would you, would you turn to books then or would you just watch television and listen to records?
>
> Derek: Depending on how long it was. Television gets boring after two or three days.
>
> Interviewer: Right. (laughs)
>
> Derek: Yeah. I'd probably start reading if I were sick for a long time.

Interviewer: Right. So you don't rule it out entirely as something you dislike to do.

Derek: No.

Interviewer: There's just a whole lot of things you like to do better.

Derek: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Chapter 7

READING THE READINGS

The ten sets of story readings provide much useful material for the researcher interested in the processing of particular texts by particular readers. It seems certain that the readers expressed only a fraction of their reading activities out loud but even so, the differences between individuals would indicate that the methodology of this study revealed some aspects of different minds at work on the same task.

The initial design of the project included the idea that Rabinowitz's rules of engagement would provide a useful key to the reading process in action. In practice, this turned out to be only partially true. All ten readers clearly made use of all four sets of rules, so to that extent Rabinowitz's approach was validated. However, many of the most interesting differences between readers happened in ways that could not be accounted for by his rules. This would probably not surprise Rabinowitz himself, because his book is full of references to the fact that readers are affected by many influences.

Rabinowitz's bias is towards the writer, in so far as he posits a predictable reader who may be expected to make sense of the writer's text according to particular conventions. For this reason, it was instructive to look at his ideas from a different angle, to inspect specific readings through the grid of his codes. Even within their limitations, this way of reading the readings produced many useful insights.

Rules of notice

The importance of the title was stressed by the questions, so it is not surprising that all ten readers paid attention to that. Some continued to pay particular heed to the title in assessing the likely development of the story; for instance, Tracy said, "'Impostor' pretty much says that Spence Olham is the impostor, like the robot, the humanoid is the impostor as Spence Olham." Hannah predicted in the second story, "Maybe the doll house will be the, the thing that brings them together. Just like the title."

But all ten also took account of other salient details, particularly in the first section of the stories. Seven of the ten noted the future setting of "Impostor" by the end of the first segment, and an eighth had taken it in by the end of the second. Eight of the ten mentioned

the little lamp in the doll's house by the end of section 1, and the remaining two commented on the detail of the description of the doll's house without specifically picking out the lamp.

Similarly, the relative importance of characters seemed to be worked out with little effort. Olham's weariness and need for a break was recorded as important at the start of "Impostor". There was considerable discussion about the roles of Peters and Nelson in "Impostor" but their place in pivotal roles in the story was registered by everybody. Nobody wasted any time in speculating about the doctor whose only role in that story is not to be called by Mary.

Similarly in "The Doll's House," only one reader mentioned by name the middle Burnell sister, Lottie, and that was merely to observe that she had no say over who visits the doll's house. Lena's nastiness to the Kelveys was noted by all, but no one had a problem when she played no further role in the story. The appearance of the Kelvey children was mentioned as significant by every single reader at the end of section 2, where they are first mentioned.

Rules of signification

This section of Before Reading is perhaps the most complex and the least thoroughly worked out, and as a consequence, it proved the most difficult to code onto the responses. There are many quotations from the ten readers which appear to establish what Rabinowitz seems to be talking about under this label. However, the stories themselves did not provide any opportunity for such judgements as the reliability of the narrator, or the establishment of different narrating voices, so much of what he has to say did not apply. However, taking as a general rule Rabinowitz's opening remark, "Once we know, through rules of notice what to attend to, we still have to face the problem of how to attend to it," (p. 76), we can look at the ten readers at work.

Some readers, like Aduku and Linda, did try to work out the degree of importance which should be granted to particular voices and particular sources of information. Aduku, for example, began to suspect Peters of being the robot,

> cause I was trying to figure out how he knows all this information about the robot. . . . And how he knew what Olham was going to do and where he'd go back and how he knew all this information about how he would feel and how he would react to things.

Similarly, Linda used the significance of sources of information in working out her comprehension of the plot:

> If Nelson is the robot he is very intelligent, because if he would have said, you know, when Olham said they were wrong about the phrase, Nelson would have known if he was the robot that it wasn't quite true.

These are examples that relate to plot rather than to the narrative as a whole, but the question of "how to attend" is nevertheless addressed.

Two of the most interesting examples of readers applying rules of signification arise from misinterpretations. Charlotte at first speculated that there might be a ghost in the little lamp to account for its prominence in the story. In a similar attempt to create sense out of limited information, Jenny suggested the possibility that the Kelveys might be black. Rabinowitz said, "Some signals are genre bound," and we see here two examples of genre being called in aid of interpretation of significance - wrongly in both cases, which makes it easier to observe.

Rules of configuration

These are the most straightforward rules of all, and we have numerous examples of all ten readers applying them appropriately - aided, of course, by the questions which constantly called for prediction. All the readers could make suggestions about how the stories might unfold. What is more interesting in some ways is how they dealt with such predictions as the stories progressed and as some of their expectations proved to be unfounded.

Rabinowitz makes more than one reference to the capacity of authors to exploit the rules of configuration in different ways.

> Authors can make use of them not only to create a sense of resolution (that is, by completing the patterns that the rules lead readers to expect, either with or without detours) but also to create surprise (by reversing them, for instance, by deflecting them, or by fulfilling them in some unanticipated way) or to irritate (by purposefully failing to fulfil them). It is important to stress this point: a rule of configuration can be just as important to the reading experience when the outcomes it predicts turn out not to take place as when they do. (111)

Rabinowitz, here as throughout the book, is referring to the rules as used by writers. He does not deal with readers or with the potential for misreading when readers pick up, correctly or otherwise, a design apparently laid down by the writer in the early part of the story, and then fail to notice how that design is confounded. It is here, perhaps above all,

that real readers part company from that well-known but mythical creature, "The Reader." Real readers operate sometimes on their own predictions in the teeth of textual evidence. They read carelessly. They fail to notice signposts. They forget. Sometimes they never notice that they are going astray. Sometimes they can see that the story makes less sense than it ought to, but they don't know what to do about it.

One of the main elements of the design of "Impostor" is that expectations are confounded on almost every page. The readers can be roughly categorised in three groups: those who liked this kind of switching from the outset (Tracy, Cassie, Aduku, Jenny, Linda, Derek), those who were won round by the ingeniousness of the final switch (Charlotte, Tasha, Hannah), and those who simply found it confusing (Carl). In some ways, the second group are the most interesting: these readers gave no indication that they had sorted out all the entanglements of the plot, but the neatness of the conclusion created sufficient satisfaction to allow them to grant some credit to the story. The capacity of the readers to abandon predictions when they stopped working also varied.

Rules of coherence

The need to ascribe some kind of satisfying shape to the whole story was very clear with these ten readers. This perhaps came across most vividly with the ones who were disappointed with a particular ending and tried to rethink their conclusions in order to arrive at some sort of acquiescence with the author's apparent intent. Charlotte, for example, expected a more dramatic turn-around in "The Doll's House" and had to adjust her expectations:

> It was okay. The ending was not really - the ending was okay. It's not what I expected. I expected them to become friends or something like - I suppose I can't expect a bunch of people to change their way of life for one story, though.

Tracy had similar problems:

> It was good, it was different. I didn't really see a point to it but I guess there doesn't really have to be a point there. It seemed like there should have been more to it, but it was good, I liked it. . . . It just seems sort of not really exciting.

Many readers summed up "The Doll's House" with some kind of moral lesson, although they were not asked explicitly to do so: "How little people appreciate what they have as well as how prejudiced people can be." (Hannah) "You shouldn't really judge people by what their parents do or what, you know, they look like or how they dress." (Cassie) "It describes how

life in those times were for the poor and the rich, how they were distinguished between each other, and how their reactions were to each other." (Aduku) "A little lesson, how people kind of can be alike or they can be so different." (Jenny)

Most of the comments on "Impostor," however, were on the cleverness of the construction of the story. Tasha, indeed, commented explicitly that cleverness was the main point of the story:

> I like the ending but as far as the story as a whole, I didn't really enjoy it much. . . . I like stories that are more in depth, I guess. I didn't, it was a really surface sort of thing.

Most readers simply commented approvingly on the writer's ability to continue the suspense right up to the end, without remarking on what was missing. Nobody in this group attempted to draw any moral at the end of "Impostor," though it could be possible to draw from the story some implications about the individual against the group. The reader who tried hardest to draw out such threads was Carl, and he had abandoned this approach by his final remarks: "As a whole, it's kind of confusing in that there's a lot of changes of what's going on. It's exciting though; there's different parts to keep you interested in the story."

Altogether, the ten readings show the readers at home with the codes of mainstream Western fiction, as Rabinowitz describes them. There was never any question about their complete ease with what he describes as the two "metarules" of configuration: something will happen, but not anything can happen. The stories are not startlingly deviant, and the readers knew how to make sense of them.

What aspects of reading are not covered by Rabinowitz's rules? His approach is general and text centred, and he pays relatively little attention to issues such as the reader's decision to re-interpret previous assessments, the need to remain open-minded, the interference or enhancement created by questions of empathy and taste, the reader's level of detachment, and the many ways in which readers juggle earlier misinterpretations.

Rabinowitz deals in the abstract with the potential for mis-reading but does not go into the subject in any depth. Thus he ignores the degree to which the reader needs to be flexible, to abandon an apparently promising approach when it seems to lead to a dead end.

The ten readers varied in their capacity to hold open more than one potential development, a particular requirement of reading "Impostor." Some commented on alternatives: "There's now two possibilities." (Aduku) "It could go either way." (Jenny)

Others were able to remark explicitly on a deliberate pattern of confounding the reader's expectations: "[I expect] the unexpected, I guess." (Linda)

Another aspect entirely ignored by his approach is the issue of empathy with the characters and its role in directing the attention of readers. Tasha gives us an interesting example of one way in which empathy can affect reading: she paid particular attention to the feelings of characters which led to a more successful reading of "The Doll's House" than of "Impostor."

A related element is the question of taste. Many of the readers showed a marked preference for one story over the other, with both stories having their defenders. Different reasons were given for these preferences. In some cases readers produced a markedly better reading of the story they preferred (Carl is a good example here), while other readers managed a reasonable interpretation of a story they actively disliked (Jenny, for instance).

Rabinowitz also leaves out the question of whether the reader explicitly acknowledges that he or she is dealing with a construct in which the author's decisions are crucial and purposeful. The ten readers sampled here actually give few indications of this kind of meta-awareness, but Linda and Derek provide hints that such a consciousness is part of their reading equipment. Linda, reading section 7 where Olham decides to investigate Sutton Wood, observed, "Well, it sort of tells me why Sutton Wood was mentioned earlier in the story." And Derek, even more vaguely, made references to "the way the story was written." He used this phrase twice, in fact, once when he discovered that Olham might be a robot ("It was just interesting to see that this actually could be a robot. The way this story was written sort of seems to pertain to him being a human being"), and again at the end when he was asked what had made him so suspicious throughout that Olham would indeed prove to be a robot ("Just something about the way the story was written").

Derek also provided an interesting example of a reader extrapolating backwards to assume that he had missed information which must have been available. Reading section 7 of "Impostor," he observed, "Sutton Woods seemed to say something to him and I didn't pick anything up earlier in the story but it's obviously got some significance to him." This can be seen as a reader compensating almost automatically for an inadequacy in earlier reading - even if I missed something earlier, I can deduce that it must have been present and so I must now read as if I had noticed it in the first place. This is very much the world of the real reader rather than the ideal reader posited by Rabinowitz. In less controlled circumstances

we can imagine Derek going back to the beginning of the story to find out what he had overlooked - but we can equally well imagine him behaving as he did here, extrapolating the gist rather than the detail: Sutton Wood has some significance for Olham and that will do to be getting on with.

Thus, looking at the ten readings, we can see readers making use of the four rules of interpretation and adding elements of re-interpretation, empathy, personal taste, meta-awareness and compromise. Standing by themselves, these ten readings provide an interesting snapshot of a set of readers in action, albeit an artificial and externally controlled form of action. Rabinowitz's four rules offer a productive starting point for observing the interaction between reader and text.

However, once we lay the four readings which were followed up alongside the further analysis of the four readers, we at once perceive the limitations of the first exercise in creating a picture of a reader.

Chapter 8

LOOKING AT THE READERS

Rabinowitz provides tools for analyzing readings. However, his book noticeably omits consideration of how readers may acquire facility in the codes that he describes so carefully, and therefore the usefulness of his approach ends when it comes to looking at readers' histories. How did a reader get to be that way? Rabinowitz does not address this issue.

Yet the evidence of the interviews which followed four of the readings suggests that the historical development of a particular reader is as important as any single performance. Our understanding of the four students who went through the second part of the research process is enormously greater than what we learned about the six who provided just the readings.

All ten readers managed fairly competent readings of "The Doll's House." One or two stumbled over sections of "Impostor," but their general approach suggested that given time to look back and re-read, all could eventually produce a reasonable interpretation of that story as well. They were working in a situation devoid of context or feedback, being asked to display their reading competence to a stranger; and given that setting, the readings are impressive.

Yet the follow-up interviews reveal four completely different kinds of readers. The contrasts between the interviews are much more striking than the contrasts between the readings. The sketches which emerge show many more subtle and complex ways of defining what a reader might be than are provided by all ten readings put together, even though it could be safely argued that the readings themselves provide more comprehensive information than many standard tests could do.

It will be useful to look first at the four readers and then at what these portraits might suggest for a wider understanding of the reading process.

JENNY

Jenny is a reader who likes to read, who nevertheless closes off possibilities for herself, yet shows occasional glimmers of power to expand her potential.

She speaks of reading in a way that combines a sense of duty with an adamant determination to be entertained at all costs; she reads "usually to overcome boredom" and

"just to keep myself going and, like, not to fall back on my reading level and stuff." She dislikes almost everything she has been asked to read for school, which she sums up as "morally inclined stories." She rejects the idea of reading somebody else's choices on a more general level as well: "I just, I enjoy doing it on my own and picking what I like, not what somebody else likes and they're forcing me to read." She seems to have actually read a large number of books but remains very intolerant and quick to dismiss a text that does not immediately snatch at her attention. She behaved this way in reading "The Doll's House;" she did the same thing with some of the page ones; and she described the same approach in her account of how she decides whether or not to read a book. Her opening stance towards a text was the same in all these activities: she insisted on being entertained. She was surprised and pleased that "Impostor" managed to keep her guessing:

> It's pretty suspenseful, like, for a story. Like, I don't get really, like, intrigued by stories that often, but that was - it kept me in suspense.

At the same time, she remembers little of the books she has read, and finds it difficult to recall titles and authors.

Yet in many ways, Jenny is a confirmed reader, more so than either of the boys in this study. She is eloquent on the pleasures of reading:

> I'll forget about the author. I'll take the book over in this sense, I guess.

> I read everywhere. When I have a book. Like, when I'm eating, when I'm, like, lying in bed, when I'm in the bath or something, or just sitting watching TV, I'll read during commercials.

Yet when she gets to the end of a book, "I'm relieved it's over."

Jenny differs from Carl and Linda in that she appears to have a constant source of discussion and recommendation of titles in her mother. To what extent this makes her a more committed reader is hard to gauge, but it certainly has an impact on her reading tastes; more often than not, she will choose a title from her mother's collection.

Jenny is perhaps best summed up as a bestseller reader. The authors she named are Danielle Steel, Sidney Sheldon, and Dean R. Koontz. She praised their capacity to keep her engaged with twists of plot; and her unwillingness to predict in "Impostor" would certainly make sense in the context of a reader who wants to be surprised on every page. Yet Jenny cannot be dismissed with such a simplistic description. Her response to the demanding first page of Cat's Eye suggests a more demanding reader hidden inside the blockbuster exterior:

> Actually, I kind of like that. It, like, really gets you thinking and you, you see if you can relate to that, like, if you, like, agree with it basically, about time and stuff, and, I don't know, like, I don't think it would pick up but it kind of seems really philosophical -is that the word? . . . And that'll get you really thinking, so that could be okay.

Given the forthright and outspoken nature of all Jenny's other comments, it does not seem possible that this remark, near the end of the interview, was put on to impress the interviewer. There are more contradictions in Jenny than are first apparent.

CARL

Carl is probably the closest we come to a reader whose present activity and account of his own past are reasonably congruent.

He was encouraged from the outset to think of reading as something he ought to do. He likes close reading and discussions of texts, but he gives little sense that he ever reads fiction for playful purposes. He speaks positively about novels read and discussed in class, but his leisure reading is mostly sports writing. His reading of both stories is striking for his propensity to tease out thematic elements in the texts; indeed to use theme almost as a key to understanding action. He says himself that he reads "for knowledge" and because "it's a good way just to get away from everything. People seem to respect the fact that you're reading." It is possible to describe Carl as a highly serious reader without being too over-simplistic and unsubtle.

Yet compared to Jenny, who seems to read so much more, Carl is less closed-minded about a new text. He is prepared to give a text a chance and to contribute his own interest and alertness in the cause of making sense of it.

Carl speaks highly of reading as an activity but does not appear to get very far from sports journalism when he actually looks for a text to pick up in his own time. Even so, by his own description, this material offers him more sense of pleasure and accomplishment than much officially approved material.

Talking about reading outside of class is a low priority for Carl, though he was the only one of the four to give a testimonial for the virtues and pleasures of class discussion. It is hard to quantify what he means when he says his friends are more likely to talk about reading than they used to be, and it is also difficult to assess how much Carl would enjoy such conversation if it were not sanctioned as course activity, and therefore work.

LINDA

Linda should be the simplest to describe of all these four readers. She loves to read, she always has, she reads all the time, she is good at it. Yet she is in many ways the most uneasy of all of them when it comes to describing herself as a reader.

> I just started reading trashy books. . . . I get tired of them quickly. But it still takes me a while to get tired of them - and I get disgusted with myself when I read books like that - like, why are you wasting yourself on them?

Despite this self-description, and the undoubted fact that she is disturbed by her reading tastes, Linda is still the most widely read of the four readers, and almost certainly the only one who reads regularly during term time. She recognised many of the first pages, either explicitly or by genre, and talked as a reader who had read many examples of different kinds of books. Her fluency in discussing the stories bore out this background; and her lifelong enthusiasm for reading came as no surprise. What was surprising was that she was the only one to speak of reading as having a negative as well as a positive impact on her life, the only one to raise the potential of "wasting yourself" on what she called "trashy smut."

The other surprise was what a solitary reader she seems to be. She said more strongly than anyone else that she had trouble finding someone to talk to about her reading, although she used to swap titles when she was younger.

DEREK

Derek summed up his own contradictions neatly: "I think I'm a good reader but not really a reader." He was originally chosen for a follow-up interview because of his assured tackling of structure and his perceptive observation of nuance in the reading of the two stories. It was anticipated that he would give an interesting but predictable account of the development of a good reader. What he had to say was certainly interesting but not in the least predictable. He does read very occasionally, but he has many, many better ways to spend his time, and it seems as if this has always been the case.

Clearly Derek is not entirely antipathetic to reading. Not only does he say so directly, but the fact that his past includes the occasional foray into a long and difficult text (such as Huckleberry Finn, Moby Dick, or Great Expectations; although it is noteworthy that he did not finish two of these titles) also testifies in favour of this interpretation. The characteristic that appears to have marked Derek's reading life most thoroughly is

indifference; yet he manages to combine that with a very creditable performance in reading the two stories.

Furthermore, it was Derek who described the widest range of social interactions based on books, even if they were frivolous ones. It was Derek who sat on the school bus looking for dirty bits in the girls' Sweet Dreams books, or listened to his sister's laments about Pride and Prejudice, or went along with his cousin's readathons but sabotaged them by falling asleep. Derek had plenty to say about many of the first pages; but what he almost never said was that he had read one of them. What he described several times was a situation where he had come across a title, had had a perfectly good chance to read it, and had not bothered. The house full of Hardy Boy books belonging to his brother is a good example; it is hard to imagine a reader of any tenacity never reading one of them, no matter how much the brother asserted ownership.

Discussion

In one way, the reading histories raise as many questions as they answer. How did Derek acquire his subtle, flexible approach to reading if not through a long, willing apprenticeship? How can Jenny have read so many books without gaining a bit more open-mindedness about the potential of a new text? Is Linda right that reading is doing her harm as well as good? Can Carl combine his perceptiveness and attentiveness with a more relaxed, pleasure-seeking approach? In the course of this research, the most revealing moment came as the second round of interviews got under way. Up to that point, the ten readings had seemed full of useful detail and insight into readers. As the follow-up interviews were taped and then transcribed, the readings began to seem more and more limited in their scope. The amount of extra information about the four readers who were interviewed twice put the data from the readings into perspective very quickly. Yes, the readings were illuminating and helpful; but without the extra material they offered a very restricted view of a reader. The enormous complexity of what actually does go to make up any reader began to come into perspective - and, even after an hour or so of discussion, there were still plenty of questions which might have been asked of each of the four who went through the second stage.

Wolfgang Iser has written a compact description of the interaction between reader and text in a particular reading:

> It is clear, then, that throughout the reading process there is a continual interplay between modified expectations and transformed memories. However, the text itself does not formulate expectations or their modification; nor does it specify how the connectability of memories is to be implemented. This is the province of the reader himself, and so here we have a first insight into how the synthesizing activity of the reader enables the text to be translated and transferred to his own mind. (111 - 112)

Without the reader there can be no reading. This is self-evident to the point of idiocy, yet the incompleteness of the account of the six readings is only manifest when compared with the greater depth of insight provided by the four readers who added accounts of their own backgrounds.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that although the interviews were expected to be full of complexity, ambiguity, and even outright contradiction, the event proved that every anticipation had been an underestimate. Shades of grey multiplied. Nobody was straightforward or easily categorised. Every extra attempt to find out more about them proved that there was still much more to find out.

Lip service is paid to the individuality of the reader, but most professionals deal with groups and there is always a need to simplify. It is all too easy to assign readers to certain loose categories: this one loves to read, this one struggles, this one needs to be less lazy. All four of the readers interviewed resist such simple categorisation so resolutely that they cast doubt on even the most well-meaning attempt to cluster them under simple headings. The challenge to larger-scale ratings and groupings is correspondingly greater.

There are times when some form of clustering is inevitable. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the evidence provided by these ordinary 16 and 17 year olds is that each simplification is a reduction. Readers are complicated, individual, perverse, untidy - the list of adjectives could go on at length.

All these readers had been exposed to books as children. All of them have developed competence in reading. The links between their current reading and their previous experience are still shadowy. The fact that a small group of real readers should resist any straightforward assessment of association between past and present reading may seem like a negative finding. In fact, it produces fascinating support for the opening assertion that reading is an exceptionally complex activity.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSIONS

Every research project, like every act of reading, takes place over time. In the eighteen months over which this project moved from a preliminary idea to a full-fledged report, the crucial turning point was undoubtedly the devising of the two tables which appear on pages 14 and 15. As an attempt to codify some of the vast amount of information about reading which exists in the literature, two lists were drawn up of factors affecting reading and ways of monitoring reading. The realisation that both would fit into a time structure and that that structure would enable constructive comparisons and contrasts to be drawn was the moment when the shape of the study became coherent.

Consequently, it seems useful at this point to go back to the chart of factors affecting reading to see how this study has succeeded in investigating some of the elements at work in the creation of a reader. There is an advertising slogan in the United Kingdom for a beer which "reaches the parts other beers cannot reach." Has this project reached new parts of readers?

In fact, a run-through of the chart shows not only that attempting to investigate such elements can shed light on a reader. It also becomes apparent that exploring such issues with real readers can shed light back on the table of factors. Such a reciprocating relationship is not surprising, and testifies that a dynamic, time-based approach to reading allows for some dialectic in the responses.

How, then, did the various attempts to explore the reading behaviour of a small group of individuals produce information which corresponds to the elements listed in the table?

BEFORE READING

Social setting

The social setting of the project itself was fixed, arbitrary, and external to the readers in almost every particular. However, the interviews did provide some insight into some of the social frameworks within which readers read. Family visits to the library, class discussions of set texts, friends exchanging books, cousins engaging in readathons, the synchronised swim team protesting as one member has to be dragged away from her book,

mother and daughter going to the bookstore, son reading to parents - all these provide particular examples of social settings of reading. Four teenagers, in less than an hour each, made many references to the settings in which they read.

Gender

Gender was not specifically taken into account in the design of this study, and observations which arise are mostly incidental. There is no telling whether it is coincidental or not that the two fiction readers of the four are the two girls. Do Derek and Carl put up more resistance to fiction reading because they are male? There is not enough evidence to decide. Other studies have shown that boys do read less fiction than girls; to take one example, the British Schools Council survey of some 8000 children aged from ten to fourteen showed a marked discrepancy between the sexes in the reading of narrative (Whitehead, 119). It is possible here only to observe that these four teenagers fall into a common pattern.

One incidental sidelight on a gender question often taken for granted arises from Carl's and Linda's remarks. Many adults assume that girls will read about boys but boys will not read about girls. Carl's fondest memories of childhood reading seem to centre on the Ramona books, and he said explicitly that the gender of the protagonist was not important to him. Linda was the only one of the four who was explicitly a fan of horror stories, which might, by some stereotypes, be considered a genre more popular with males. Again, with such a small sample, this information has no generalisable value whatever, but it raises yet another question about how much assumptions can create blinkers against a more complex reality. Would an adult looking for a book to attract a little boy who is diffident, at best, about his enthusiasm for reading, pass over Ramona because she is female?

Reader's personal history

This study deliberately set out to avoid dealing with personal history as far as possible for two reasons. One was the potential for intrusiveness, in the hands of an amateur with no grounding in psychology or any related disciplines. The other was a wish to explore how much information could be gleaned about a reader without pressing for personal information. With that in mind, the only personal question asked was the number of brothers and sisters,

on the grounds that siblings represent a potentially powerful reading community for a particular person.

In the course of the interviews, of course, some personal background did come out, but the participants themselves mentioned only what might have some bearing on their reading. Thus, there were references to Carl's dislike of having to read half an hour a day, to Jenny's mortification when she got the worst grade in the reading test, to Linda's unhappiness with much of her daily existence. None of these issues was pursued, and their impact on the reading behaviour of the participants is noted but not analyzed.

Reader's self concept

Again, this topic was investigated in a strictly limited way. Participants were all asked if they considered themselves to be a good reader, and all four answered very freely, but other questions about their perceptions of themselves as students in general, as people at large, and so forth, were excluded from the process.

Even with this limited approach, the answers to the question about the reader's assessment of his or her own competence were perceptive and illuminating.

Reader's reading history

This factor was obviously taken into account as fully as possible and it is the argument of this report that an understanding of the behaviour of the readers was enhanced by what they had to say about their own reading backgrounds. It is also arguable that an involved adult who worked on the basis of the readings alone might make what would be revealed as errors of judgement in the light of the follow-up material. For example, it might be assumed that reading slowly was one of Jenny's main problems so she should be encouraged to read exciting books to help speed her up. The follow-up work soon revealed that she is already doing a great deal of that kind of reading, and might indeed benefit from exposure to a range of more slow-moving and thoughtful texts - as long as she could be "hooked" which seems to be her prime selection criterion. Similarly, the readings might indicate that Linda is a strong reader who needs little help, whereas the interview indicated that she would benefit from exposure to a wide range of reading, perhaps starting with fantasy since that is her first choice. More than once she referred to paucity of selection as a problem.

These are pragmatic issues but they reflect a theoretical point as well. If readers are judged by their current behaviour alone, there is a risk of developing a lopsided view of their strengths and weaknesses.

Reader's experience of other fictions

This issue was only partially covered by the interviews, largely because of time constraints. All four participants mentioned other media but it is not possible to make any judgement about how such experience feeds into their reading except tangentially. Jenny made an interesting comparison between reading and watching a film of the book:

> The book is interesting and all, but then you can, like, you get to see everything; you don't have to sit there and visualise it all and with the movie you can just see everything and you don't have to make up everything yourself. . . . I'll always sit there when I read and . . . I'll picture it or whatever. But I don't like everything; it becomes boring and it gives me a headache.

Carl referred to his favourite books when he was small which contained cartoon characters such as Bugs Bunny and Sylvester the Cat. Carl and Derek both read magazines more than books. Most participants at some point made some remark about limits to how long you could watch television. But all of these are individual preferences and tastes and there is no general lesson to be gleaned from them. It is not possible from the information gathered to make any assessment of how far these readers' fiction-reading capacities were developed or honed by experiences in other media.

Reader's ideology

Not surprisingly, these teenagers made no explicit comments on this topic. A number of the ten readers endorsed the idea that a story should contain some kind of message or moral (with the implicit exception of Jenny who certainly noted the lesson but did not appear to be impressed by it, except in her one comment on The Pigman, when she remarked approvingly on its "load of morals").

It is probably possible to trawl through the transcripts and pick out certain ideological implications in particular remarks but it seems likely that much of this work would be speculative at best. Other tools need to be developed if there is to be any serious study of this aspect of reading in this kind of format.

Reader's discourse repertoire

The four participants displayed a limited range of registers in discussing the material under investigation - hardly surprising when the circumstances are taken into account: they sat in an office, in school, missing an English class to talk with an adult stranger about aspects of their reading, while the tape recorder noted every word. Jenny was probably the one who most successfully persisted in using very informal English; Carl appeared to be most constrained by the surroundings. Tasha was the one who used the most "school"-based language, with her references to vocabulary and "sentencing."

Even with the homogenising effect of the circumstances in which the readings and interviews were conducted, there is some interest in comparing the ways in which they talked about the stories and about the page ones where they were being asked to do different things; and their own accounts of their personal pasts involved yet another kind of language.

The main impact of this entry in the list must be to function as a warning to the researcher. It is almost certain that no reader displayed the full range of discourses used in more ordinary circumstances, even just to talk about books. Even Jenny, with all her "like"s and "stuff"s spoke, for the most part in relatively complete sentences; and the others spoke even more formally. They were articulate and thoughtful; but they confined their conversation within fairly tight discourse limits.

Reader's reason for reading

At one level, this element was entirely external and artificial in the circumstances of the research. The selection of stories, the circumstances of the reading, the method of feedback, were all controlled by the researcher.

On the other hand, in the follow-up discussions this aspect of reading was dealt with specifically and some of the reactions were interesting. What came across quite clearly, especially with Carl and Jenny, but to a lesser extent with Linda and Derek as well, was the idea that young people can be seized with motives of self-improvement which may lead them to reading. Even Derek, who apparently reads the least of the four, referred to his attempts in Grade 6 to read Huckleberry Finn and Moby Dick.

> My interests changed a little. . . . I was becoming more interested in my own education at that time. . . . I was enjoying school more, so I was probably beginning to enjoy my learning a little more.

Carl and Jenny both referred to an element of self-improvement in their reading; only Linda, it seems, simply reads because she can't help it, and even she apparently feels that reading ought to enhance her.

Choice of title

As with the reasons for reading, this element, at least in the first session, was entirely controlled by the researcher. The readers did, however, make some effort to discuss how they choose books for themselves. Their behaviour is idiosyncratic even at this level, from Derek throwing a Reader's Digest set of condensed titles in the car and picking out the most promising of the five titles, to Jenny who reads as far as a quarter of the way into the book before she decides to keep going or give up - and who can be discouraged even late in the book and put it down or jump to the end.

DURING READING

Reader's competence

The readings gave one picture of this element. The ten readers demonstrated a range of competence but not a very wide one. This is not really surprising; all these students came from English 20 classes where a reasonable aptitude for reading might be assumed. What was interesting was the variety of competent readings which was possible even within two sets of ten readings. What was also intriguing was the apparent limit to that variety. Every reader noticed some detail that the others missed, but nobody came up with an interpretation which would have startled the others. It is possible to imagine a discussion about the stories between all ten readers being fruitful but not dramatic.

Reader's degree of interest and/or alertness

Naturally, reading in public, the participants made some effort to be alert. Interest had to be more hardly won, but they appeared to be intrigued by the novelty of the situation and that may have encouraged a favourable response to the stories. Nobody appeared to hesitate in expressing a preference between the stories; though it is possible that they were affected to some extent by the supposition that only a good story would have been chosen for such unusual treatment. It should be remembered also that they were still engaged in

school-sanctioned activity; and that therefore some "school" criteria of story selection might reasonably be expected to be in play and to affect kind and degree of interest.

Difficulty of text

Difficulty and taste appeared to interact in the reactions of the students. Not surprisingly, readers who found a story difficult tended not to like it so much; but there was probably also an reverse element of those who disliked a story tending to find it more difficult. What was interesting was the variety of methods students used to ameliorate their difficulties; they looked for ways to make sense of the story, even when the text confounded them. They commented on the general pattern of "Impostor" even if the details caused them trouble. They searched for explanations which would address the sharp injustices in "The Doll's House" and also make its downbeat ending coherent to their sense of dramatic shape.

Reader's empathy with characters

Spence Olham, Kezia Burnell and the Kelvey children were candidates to be considered here, and all had their champions. Some readers placed more stress on characters' feelings than others. There was also a different kind of relationship to the story which might be described as an empathy with the implied author, an attunement to the narrative voice. This is an expansion on the concept implied by the heading but it was apparent with some of the readers and is worth mentioning. Thus, Carl was almost immediately happier with "The Doll's House" than with "Impostor," while Jenny was exactly the opposite.

Genre

Most readers picked up that "Impostor" is a genre story in the conventional sense of the phrase. It was interesting to note in the work with the page ones that Jenny and Linda were considerably more alert to genre cues than the two boys. Not only did they identify the two romance series books, where they might be expected to have an advantage in terms of experience since these books are directed at girls, but Linda also instantly identified the Blyton and Keene books as "like a Nancy Drew book," and Jenny dismissed Stephen King's cowboy in what can only be described as implicit genre terms: "Like, big deal, he's in the desert. It happens all the time in books."

The two girls had broader reading experience than the two boys and this may be reflected in more efficient categorisation. It does not seem to be entirely a straightforward question of having read the genres in question. Jenny recognised the limitations of the Sweet Valley book at one glance but later said she had never read any of them, because of those very limitations. Derek had actually looked at several series books, searching for the dirty bits, but he missed the cues about the twins.

Carl was the most striking reader in that he picked up virtually no genre cues whatever. He failed to notice even the most obvious and most contemporary series title, Keeping Secrets with the famous Sweet Valley Twins (although his own sisters read these books). Throughout his assessment of the page ones, he made no comment that could be construed as a generic construction or categorisation.

Intertextual requirements and presuppositions of text being read

This topic arose only partially and tangentially, because of the nature of the material. Neither story required an intertextual reading, although those readers who called in other science fiction stories probably came to grips with "Impostor" more quickly. Some readers used intertextual reference to help with the setting of "The Doll's House," either calling on the historical reference point established by Little House on the Prairie or looking for genre clues such as the possibility of a ghost in the little lamp. When readers lacked reference points, as in Jenny's speculation that the Kelveys might be black, the importance of making connections with other texts became clearer. It is likely that much of the successful processing of textual presuppositions was simply invisible.

Ideology of text

None of the readers picked up an essential theme of "Impostor," the idea that when the "group fear" asserts itself against an individual, the group fear will be proved right and the individual wrong. It would be reasonably plausible to ascribe a McCarthyite interpretation to this story, especially given that the author is an American born in 1928. The students were not given this information and it is doubtful that any of them would possess the background knowledge necessary to reach such a reading of the text. In fact, their comments about this story concentrate on the shape of the plot to the exclusion of

almost every other consideration, although there were some early comments on the implications of the war and of Spence's project.

"The Doll's House" is much more explicitly a story about social injustice, so it is not surprising that the readers made more comments about the morality of the society described.

Mode of presentation

This was entirely controlled in the readings. The students read silently and were interrupted at set intervals.

Questions of reading aloud or being read to were discussed by these students entirely in the past tense, looking back to early childhood. Nobody mentioned any present interest in either alternative mode.

First or subsequent reading of text

This likewise was controlled in the two stories. The readers met the text for the first time, read it once and commented on it without any time for reflection.

There was some reference to re-reading in the interviews. Carl was the most positive on the subject; Derek the least. Derek "like[s] to read carefully the first time," with the result that he finds,"there's not that much more new information I seem to be able to get out of it." Linda and Jenny try to wait to re-read until they've forgotten as much as possible, so that the second reading acquires some of the freshness of the first. Both, however, commented on the possibility of noticing new points on a re-reading and Linda, in particular, gave some suggestion of going back to a book to savour it again. She re-reads a great deal and says her motive is, "Enjoyment. Wishing I could be there instead of here."

Community of interpreters

The situation set up for the research meant that the stories were read without any community of interpreters actively present. The researcher provided very little feedback and students were left to make their own interpretations without support beyond the specific questions. However, all of them referred in many ways to various communities in which they had moved in their reading pasts and obviously some of these had affected the ways in which they read more than others.

Perhaps surprisingly, it was Jenny who seemed to read within the widest community. She had her mother as a constant source of conversation and recommendation. She talked to her friends and they shared titles during holidays. It is possible, although there is no specific evidence to this effect, that she benefits from reading from a range of authors who are widely socially sanctioned, if not necessarily by English teachers. Reading Sheldon, Koontz, and Steel means she operates in a particularly wide interpretive community, even if it is not an especially critical one.

Linda, who reads the most, has problems finding companions to discuss her reading with. Her assessment of school English classes is not clear because of constraints of time in her interview. Carl, whose friends don't appear to read very much, at least has the support of novel discussions in class. Derek lives in a world where books are part of the scenery but doesn't often seem to be moved to any real involvement with books as a consequence.

It seems plausible, however, to project that the way in which Jenny, Linda, Carl, and possibly Derek develop as readers will be greatly affected by the reading communities in which they find themselves in the future. The first three do appear to be assisted in their reading choices by the people around them, at least to some extent. Derek has successfully resisted the pull of any reading community so far; he seems the most likely to be unswayed by friends and colleagues in the future.

AFTER READING

Opportunity to reflect/discuss

Students were given a limited opportunity to discuss the two stories as they reached the end, but it was very much an immediate and one-way discussion. In the interviews, Jenny, Linda and Derek made reference to thinking about books after they had finished them, and Carl praised his class discussions of novels and said he found them helpful.

Opportunity to re-read

This was necessarily not provided for in the structure of this project, except as individuals spoke about it, and this has already been discussed.

Community of interpreters

Only Carl made a reference to a discussion about a book reflecting back onto the reading of that book and making a retrospective difference to it. This does not mean that it never happens with the others, but it did not strike them as an important aspect of their private reading.

CONCLUSIONS

The research question

What is the association between prior reading experience and the reading strategies of adolescents as they read two specific short stories?

A very brief answer to that question would be as follows: the association is a complicated one. The anomaly of Derek's contribution precludes any confident assertion of a straightforward relationship between a person's reading past and present reading capacities.

Another way of answering that question is to say that the association, while it cannot be readily untangled, is such that any analysis of a single reading is necessarily partial and should be acknowledged thus.

With a small group such as the one studied here, it would be idle to assert any definitive findings. The limitations of this study are obvious. What is clear, and in some ways more interesting than a cut-and-dried answer to the research question, is that this approach offers considerable potential for exploring how readers make sense of text. Rabinowitz offers guidelines about how texts shape the responses of readers; an approach such as the one outlined in this study makes some attempt to explore how and why readers shape their readings as they do, within the limits of that text.

Implications

What are the implications of this study? In practical terms, it might well be that a teacher or librarian could mount a modified version of such a study to build a set of readers' files. Ben Nelms and Don Zancanella describe a course where student teachers are assigned the project of making reading profiles of a partner, using some approaches similar to the work in this study (45 - 48). It would be feasible to set up a class project where students produce written, rather than oral, interpretations of segmented stories, and written responses to a set of first pages; and where they then work together to produce a reading biography

which could be stored with the reading responses. Such a file would enrich reading consultancy work, at a tolerable cost of time and effort.

The major implication of this study, however, is its theoretical import. When an effort is made to balance experience of common texts (the two stories and the page ones) with a personal retrospective, the outcome is a complicated and unpredictable picture of an individual reader. That readers are individual is a motherhood statement which cannot possibly be classed as a discovery. However, for the modest investment of two hours per person, plus transcribing time, with an approach that concentrated entirely on reading prowess and tastes and did not attempt to delve into other personal or scholastic achievement, this study resulted in accounts of four readers which show a rich variety of approaches, attitudes and aptitudes. No simple reading score could ever sum up this quality of information. If four teenagers can be so interesting, the intricate and complicated variety of readers in the world at large must be infinitely fascinating.

WORKS CITED

Anderson, Richard C., and P. David Pearson. 1984. "A Schema-Theoretic View of Basic Reading Processes in Reading Comprehension." Handbook of Reading Research. Ed. P. David Pearson. New York: Longman. 255 - 291.

Applebee, Arthur N. 1978. The Child's Concept of Story: Ages Two to Seventeen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Atwell, Nancie. 1987. In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents. Portsmouth NH: Boynton/Cook.

Barthes, Roland. 1975. S/Z. Trans. Richard Miller. London: Jonathan Cape.

Belsey, Catherine. 1980. Critical Practice. New Accents. London: Methuen.

Bruner, Jerome. 1986. Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Culler, Jonathan. 1975. Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

---. 1980. "Prolegomena to a Theory of Reading." The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation. Ed. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 46 - 66.

Frazer, Elizabeth. 1987. "Teenage Girls Reading Jackie." Media, Culture and Society 9: 407 - 425.

Fry, Donald. 1985. Children Talking about Books: Seeing Themselves as Readers. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Hade, Daniel D. 1988. "Children, Stories, and Narrative Transformations." Research in the Teaching of English 22: 310 - 325.

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1983. Ways with Words: Language,Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hincks, Tony and John W. Balding. 1988. "On the Relationship between Television Viewing Time and Book Reading for Pleasure: The Self-Reported Behaviour of 11 to 16 Year Olds." Reading 22: 40 - 50.

Iser, Wolfgang. 1978. The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Langer, Judith A. 1986. Children Reading and Writing:Structures and Strategies. Norwood: Ablex.

Meek, Margaret. 1988. How Texts Teach What Readers Learn. Stroud, Glos.: Thimble Press.

Mitchell, Claudia. 1981. An Ethnographic Study of the Metacognitive Functioning of Voracious Adult Readers of Fiction. Diss. University of Alberta.

Nell, Victor. 1988. Lost in a Book: The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Nelms, Ben and Don Zancanella. 1990. "The Experience of Literature and the Study of Literature: The Teacher Educator's Experience." Reading and Response. Ed. Michael Hayhoe and Stephen Parker. Milton Keynes: Open University Press. 34 - 48.

Protherough, Robert. 1983. Developing Response to Fiction. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Rabinowitz, Peter J. 1987. Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Sanders, Maureen. 1987. "Literacy as 'Passionate Attention.'" Language Arts 64: 619 - 633.

Sarland, Charles. 1988. Young People Reading: A Study of the Cultural, Ideological and Experiential Factors in the Interaction between Young People and Fictional Texts. Diss. University of East Anglia.

Squire, James R. 1964. The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories. NCTE Research Report No. 2. Champaign IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Thomson, Jack. 1987. Understanding Teenagers' Reading:Reading Processes and the Teaching of Literature. Melbourne: Methuen Australia.

Thornton, Geoffrey. 1986. APU Language Testing 1979 -1983: An Independent Appraisal of the Findings. London: Department of Education and Science.

Vandergrift, Kay E. 1990. "The Child's Meaning-Making in Response to a Literary Text." English Quarterly 22: 125 - 140.

Whitehead, Frank et al. 1977. Children and their Books. Schools Council Research Studies. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Williams, Raymond. 1985. The Country and the City. London: Hogarth Press.

WORKS CONSULTED

This list includes material used in the creation of the two tables on pages 14 and 15, but not directly cited elsewhere in the report.

Batsleer, Janet et al. 1985. "Some Women Reading." Rewriting English: Cultural Politics of Gender and Class. London: Methuen. 140 - 154.

Beach, Richard. 1985. "Discourse Conventions and Researching Response to Literary Dialogue." Researching Response to Literature and the Teaching of Literature: Points of Departure. Ed. Charles R. Cooper. Norwood: Ablex. 103 - 127.

Beach, Richard, and Linda Wendler. 1987. "Developmental Differences in Response to a Story." Research in the Teaching of English 21: 286 - 297.

Benton, Michael and Geoff Fox. 1985. Teaching Literature: Nine to Fourteen. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buckingham, David. 1987. "Reading EastEnders." The English Magazine 19: 18 - 23.

Bunbury, Rhonda, and Reinbert Tabbert. 1989. "A Bicultural Study of Identification: Readers' Responses to the Ironic Treatment of a National Hero." Children's Literature in Education 20: 25 - 35.

Burke, Adrian. 1986. "Readings of Ted Hughes's Short Story, 'The Rain Horse.'" English in Education 20.1: 27 - 36.

Butler, Helen Lewis. 1987. "Three Readers Reading: Responses to A Level." English in Education 21.2: 32 - 42.

Cochran-Smith, Marilyn. 1984. The Making of a Reader. Norwood: Ablex.

Crago, Hugh. 1987. "Easy Connections: Emotional Truth and Fictional Gratifications." Signal 52: 38 - 62.

Culp, Mary Beth. 1985. "Literature's Influence on Young Adult Attitudes, Values, and Behavior, 1975 and 1984." English Journal 74.8: 31 - 35.

Guthrie, John T. and Joanne M. Golden. 1986. "Convergence and Divergence in Reader Response to Literature." Reading Research Quarterly, XXI: 408 - 421.

Hawkins, Jillian. 1986. "'It's How the Story Is, Really': Response to 2 Types of Narrative in Some Primary Children." English in Education 20.3: 20 - 30.

Heather, Pauline. 1981. Young People's Reading: a Study of the Leisure Reading of 13 - 15 Year Olds. CRUS Occasional Paper No. 6. Sheffield: British Library Board.

Hynds, Susan D. 1985. "Interpersonal Cognitive Complexity and the Literary Response Processes of Adolescent Readers." Research in the Teaching of English 19: 386 - 402.

---. 1989. "Bringing Life to Literature and Literature to Life: Social Constructs and Contexts of Four Adolescent Readers." Research in the Teaching of English 23: 30 - 61.

Lehr, Susan. 1988. "The Child's Developing Sense of Theme as a Response to Literature." Reading Research Quarterly XXIII: 337 - 357.

Littlefair, Alison. 1989. "Register Awareness: An Important Factor in Children's Continuing Reading Development." Reading 23: 56 - 61.

Long, Shirley A., Peter N. Winograd, and Connie A. Bridge. 1989. "The Effects of Reader and Text Characteristics on Imagery Reported During and After Reading." Reading Research Quarterly XXIV: 353 - 372.

McConaughy, Stephanie H. 1985. "Good and Poor Readers' Comprehension of Story Structure across Different Input and Output Modalities." Reading Research Quarterly XX: 219 - 232.

MacMartin, Morag. 1989. "Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension in Primary Pupils." UKRA Newsletter, June. 23 - 25.

Marriott, Stuart. 1985. "'Me Mum She Says It's Bigotry': Children's Responses to The Twelfth Day of July." Children's Literature in Education 16: 53 - 61.

Martin, Tony. 1989. The Strugglers: Working with Children who Fail to Learn to Read. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Meek, Margaret et al. 1983. Achieving Literacy: Longitudinal Studies of Adolescents Learning to Read. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Minns, Hilary. 1990. Read it to Me Now! Learning at Home and at School. London: Virago.

Morrow, Lesley Mandel. 1988. "Young Children's Responses to One-to-One Story Readings in School Settings." Reading Research Quarterly XXIII: 89 - 107.

Moss, Gemma. 1989. Un/Popular Fictions. London: Virago.

Mudd, Norma. 1987. "Influences of the Text and the Reader's Background Knowledge upon Responses to Comprehension Questions." Reading 21: 125 - 134.

Olson, Arthur and Anne Davies. 1989. "The Influence of Gender Differences on Story Retelling." Reading 23: 32 - 38.

Radway, Janice A. 1987. Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature. London: Verso.

Randall, Alice, Marilyn M. Fairbanks, and Mary Lynch Kennedy. 1986. "Using Think-Aloud Protocols Diagnostically with College Readers." Reading Research and Instruction 25: 240 - 253.

Roberts, Lorna. 1982. The 1981 Bookmaster Scheme. London: Westminster City Libraries.

Robertson, Sandra L. 1990. "Text Rendering: Beginning Literary Response." English Journal 79.1: 80 - 84.

Sadoski, Mark, Ernest T. Goetz, and Suzanne Kangiser. 1988. "Imagination in Story Response: Relationships between Imagery, Affect and Structural Importance." Reading Research Quarterly XXIII: 320 - 336.

Sulzby, Elizabeth. 1985. "Children's Emergent Reading of Favorite Storybooks: A Developmental Study." Reading Research Quarterly XX: 458 - 481.

Taylor, Helen. 1989. Scarlett's Women: Gone with the Wind and its Female Fans. London: Virago.

Thorpe, Dina. 1988. Reading for Fun: A Study of How Parents and Libraries Encouraged Children aged 9 - 12 to Read for Enjoyment. Cranfield: Cranfield Press.

Viguers, Susan T. 1988. "My Mother, my Children, and Books." Signal 55: 23 - 32.

White, Dorothy. 1984. Books before Five. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Zaharias, Jane A. 1986. "The Effect of Genre and Tone on Undergraduate Students' Preferred Patterns of Response to Two Short Stories and Two Poems." Research in the Teaching of English 20: 56 - 68.

Appendix 1

PERMISSION FORMS

Once the proposal for this study had been passed by the ethics review panels of the Faculty of Library and Information Studies and the Faculty of Education, and approved by the School Board, it was necessary to contact the school. An explanation of the project was given verbally to the principal and the head of the English department, and letters and consent forms for students and their parents were given to the English teachers for distribution to participating students. Copies of these letters and forms are attached, and make clear how much the participants were aware of the purpose and nature of the study. Very little verbal elaboration of this information was given at the interviews. Students were mainly asked not to discuss the stories with their classmates who might be reading them later.

Faculty of Library and Information Studies
University of Alberta
April 1991

Dear Student,

I am looking for a number of Grade Eleven students to help in a study of reading interests which I am undertaking for my university degree of Master of Library and Information Studies. I am interested in investigating how people read and what they like to read, particularly as they pass through adolescence and start to become adult readers. People who read widely and people who read little are equally important to this study. I hope that this work may contribute to our understanding of how reading develops through the teenage years.

If you agree to help in this study, I will ask you to read two stories silently to yourself, commenting on developments at specific points during the reading. I am more interested in a range of responses than in any particular "correct" answers. Later, I will return and ask some students for information about the kinds of reading they have done up to now.

All the answers given will be stored under a pseudonym and when all the information is accumulated the link between the pseudonyms and your real names will be destroyed.

My research will be entirely independent of classroom activity and evaluation, and the interviews and their content will not be discussed with teachers or school officials.

If you consent, you will spend one and, in some cases, two sessions with me. Each session will last approximately one hour. The discussions will be taped and transcribed.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form and return it to your English teacher. Regulations of the university and the school board also require me to obtain consent from your parent or guardian before this research can take place.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 436 - 6268, or call my thesis supervisor, Dr. Anna Altmann, Faculty of Library and Information Studies, at 492 - 5315.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Mackey

Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: A Qualitative Study of the Association between Adolescent Fiction Reading Strategies and Prior Reading Experience

INVESTIGATOR: Margaret Mackey
MLIS Student
Faculty of Library and Information Studies
University of Alberta

ADVISOR: Dr. Anna Altmann
Faculty of Library and Information Studies
University of Alberta
Telephone: 492 - 5315

This is to certify that I,_____, hereby agree to participate in this research project, the purpose of which is to increase understanding of the reading process in adolescents.

I consent to be interviewed by the investigator and to have the interview taped. I understand that the interview tapes will be heard only by the investigator and the person transcribing the interview tapes. The information I provide will be kept strictly confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

I understand that I am free to decline to answer specific questions during the interview, or to discontinue my participation at any time.

_____
(Signature of Participant)

_____
(Date)

_____
(Signature of Investigator)

Faculty of Library and Information Studies
University of Alberta
April 1991

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am writing to ask your permission for your son/daughter to take part in a study of reading interests which I am undertaking for my university degree of Master of Library and Information Studies. I am interested in investigating how people read and what they like to read, particularly as they pass through adolescence and start to become adult readers. People who read widely and people who read little are equally important to this study. I hope that this work may contribute to our understanding of how reading develops through the teenage years.

For this research, I would ask your son/daughter to read and comment on two stories and give me some information about reading done in the past. All the answers given will be stored under a pseudonym and when all the information is accumulated the link between the pseudonyms and the real names will be destroyed.

My research will be entirely independent of classroom activity and evaluation, and the interviews and their content will not be discussed with teachers or school officials.

If you consent, your son/daughter will spend one and, in some cases, two sessions with me. Each session will last approximately one hour. The discussions will be taped and transcribed.

If you agree to let your son/daughter participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form and return it to your ward's English teacher.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 436 - 6268, or call my thesis supervisor, Dr. Anna Altmann, Faculty of Library and Information Studies, at 492 - 5315.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Mackey

Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: A Qualitative Study of the Association between Adolescent Fiction Reading Strategies and Prior Reading Experience

INVESTIGATOR: Margaret Mackey
MLIS Student
Faculty of Library and Information Studies
University of Alberta

ADVISOR: Dr. Anna Altmann
Faculty of Library and Information Studies
University of Alberta
Telephone: 492 - 5315

This is to certify that I,_____, hereby agree to allow my son/daughter _____ _____ to participate in this research project, the purpose of which is to increase understanding of the reading process in adolescents.

I consent to allow my son/daughter to be interviewed by the investigator and to have the interview taped. I understand that the interview tapes will be heard only by the investigator and the person transcribing the interview tapes. The information provided will be kept strictly confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

I understand that my son/daughter is free to decline to answer specific questions during the interview, or to discontinue his/her participation at any time.

_____
(Signature of Parent or Guardian)

_____
(Date)

_____
(Signature of Investigator)

Appendix 2

THE SHORT STORIES

"Impostor" by Philip K. Dick

"The Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield

The stories are here presented exactly as they were handed to the students, divided into numbered sections. At the end of each section students were asked a number of questions (see page 21).

This copy of "Impostor" taken from Spectrum Two: Modern Short Stories, edited by Bruce Bennett, Peter Cowan and John Hay, published by Longman in 1970. This copy of "The Doll's House" was taken from The Doves' Nest and other stories by Katherine Mansfield, published by the Macmillan Company of Canada in 1923.

IMPOSTOR - 1a

'ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO TAKE TIME OFF,' SPENCE OLHAM SAID AT first-meal. He looked around at his wife. 'I think I've earned a rest. Ten years is a long time.'

'And the Project?'

'The war will be won without me. This ball of clay of ours isn't really in much danger.' Olham sat down at the table and lit a cigarette. 'The news machines alter dispatches to make it appear the Outspacers are right on top of us. You know what I'd like to do on my vacation? I'd like to take a camping trip in those mountains outside of town, where we went that time. Remember? I got poison oak and you almost stepped on a gopher snake.'

'Sutton Wood?' Mary began to clear away the food dishes. 'The Wood was burned a few weeks ago. I thought you knew. Some kind of a flash fire.'

Olham sagged. 'Didn't they even try to find the cause?' His lips twisted. 'No one cares any more. All they can think of is the war.' He clamped his jaws together, the whole picture coming up in his mind, the Outspacers, the war, the needle ships.

'How can we think about anything else?'

Olham nodded. She was right, of course. The dark little ships out of Alpha Centauri had by-passed the Earth cruisers easily, leaving them like helpless turtles. It had been one-way fights, all the way back to Terra.

All the way, until the protec-bubble was demonstrated at Westinghouse Labs. Thrown around the major Earth cities and finally the planet itself, the bubble was the first real defence, the first legitimate answer to the Outspacers—as the news machines labelled them.

But to win the war, that was another thing. Every lab, every project was working night and day, endlessly, to find something more: a weapon for positive combat. His own project, for example. All day long, year after year.

Olham stood up, putting out his cigarette. 'Like the Sword of Damocles. Always hanging over us. I'm getting tired. All I want to do is take a long rest. But I guess everybody feels that way.'

He got his jacket from the closet and went out on the front porch. The shoot would be along any moment, the fast little bug that would carry him to the Project.

'I hope Nelson isn't late.' He looked at his watch. 'It's almost seven.'

'Here the bug comes,' Mary said, gazing between the rows of houses. The sun glittered behind the roofs, reflecting against the heavy lead plates. The settlement was quiet; only a few people were stirring. 'I'll see you later. Try not to work beyond your shift, Spence.'

IMPOSTOR - 16

Olham opened the car door and slid inside, leaning back against the seat with a sigh. There was an older man with Nelson.

'Well?' Olham said, as the bug shot ahead. 'Heard any interesting news?'

'The usual,' Nelson said. 'A few Outspace ships hit, another asteroid abandoned for strategic reasons.'

'It'll be good when we get the Project into final stage. Maybe it's just the propaganda from the news machines, but in the last month I've got weary of all this. Everything seems so grim and serious, no colour to life.'

'Do you think the war is in vain?' the older man said suddenly. 'You are an integral part of it, yourself.'

'This is Major Peters,' Nelson said. Olham and Peters shook hands. Olham studied the older man.

'What brings you along so early?' he said, 'I don't remember seeing you at the Project before.'

'No, I'm not with the Project,' Peters said, 'but I know something about what you're doing. My own work is altogether different.'

A look passed between him and Nelson. Olham noticed it and frowned. The bug was gaining speed, flashing across the barren, lifeless ground toward the distant rim of the Project buildings.

IMPOSTOR - 2a

'What is your business?' Olham said. 'Or aren't you permitted to talk about it?'

'I'm with the government,' Peters said. 'With FSA, the Security Organ.'

'Oh?' Olham raised an eyebrow. 'Is there any enemy infiltration in this region?'

'As a matter of fact I'm here to see you, Mr. Olham.'

Olham was puzzled. He considered Peters' words, but he could make nothing of them. 'To see me? Why?'

'I'm here to arrest you as an Outspace spy. That's why I'm up so early this morning. *Grab him, Nelson—*'

The gun drove into Olham's ribs. Nelson's hands were shaking, trembling with released emotion, his face pale. He took a deep breath and let it out again.

'Shall we kill him now?' he whispered to Peters. 'I think we should kill him now. We can't wait.'

Olham stared into his friend's face. He opened his mouth to speak, but no words came. Both men were staring at him steadily, rigid and grim with fright. Olham felt dizzy. His head ached and spun.

'I don't understand,' he murmured.

At that moment the shoot car left the ground and rushed up, heading into space. Below them the Project fell away, smaller and smaller, disappearing. Olham shut his mouth.

'We can wait a little,' Peters said. 'I want to ask him some questions first.'

IMPOSTOR - 2b

Olham gazed dully ahead as the bug rushed through space.

'The arrest was made all right,' Peters said into the vidscreen. On the screen the features of the Security chief showed. 'It should be a load off everyone's mind.'

'Any complications?'

'None. He entered the bug without suspicion. He didn't seem to think my presence was too unusual.'

'Where are you now?'

'On our way out, just inside the protec-bubble. We're moving at maximum speed. You can assume that the critical period is past. I'm glad the take-off jets in this craft were in good working order. If there had been any failure at that point—'

'Let me see him,' the Security chief said. He gazed directly at Olham where he sat, his hands in his lap, staring ahead.

'So that's the man.' He looked at Olham for a time. Olham said nothing. At last the chief nodded to Peters. 'All right. That's enough.' A faint trace of disgust wrinkled his features. 'I've seen all I want. You've done something that will be remembered for a long time. They're preparing some sort of citation for both of you.'

'That's not necessary,' Peters said.

'How much danger is there now? Is there still much chance that—'

'There is some chance, but not too much. According to my understanding, it requires a verbal key phrase. In any case we'll have to take the risk.'

'I'll have the Moon base notified you're coming.'

'No,' Peters shook his head. 'I'll land the ship outside, beyond the base. I don't want it in jeopardy.'

'Just as you like.' The chief's eyes flickered as he glanced again at Olham. Then his image faded. The screen blanked.

Olham shifted his gaze to the window. The ship was already through the protec-bubble, rushing with greater and greater speed all the time. Peters was in a hurry; below him, rumbling under the floor, the jets were wide open. They were afraid, hurrying frantically, because of him.

Next to him on the seat, Nelson shifted uneasily. 'I think we should do it now,' he said. 'I'd give anything if we could get it over with.'

'Take it easy,' Peters said. 'I want you to guide the ship for a while so I can talk to him.'

He slid over beside Olham, looking into his face. Presently he reached out and touched him gingerly, on the arm and then on the cheek.

Olham said nothing. *If I could let Mary know*, he thought again. *If I could find some way of letting her know.* He looked around the ship. How? The vidscreen? Nelson was sitting by the board, holding the gun. There was nothing he could do. He was caught, trapped.

IMPOSTOR - 3a

But why?

'Listen,' Peters said. 'I want to ask you some questions. You know where we're going. We're moving Moonward. In an hour we'll land on the far side, on the desolate side. After we land you'll be turned over immediately to a team of men waiting there. Your body will be destroyed at once. Do you understand that?' He looked at his watch. 'Within two hours your parts will be strewn over the landscape. There won't be anything left of you.'

Olham struggled out of his lethargy. 'Can't you tell me—'

'Certainly, I'll tell you.' Peters nodded. 'Two days ago we received a report that an Outspace ship had penetrated the protec-bubble. The ship let off a spy in the form of a humanoid robot. The robot was to destroy a particular human being and take his place.'

Peters looked calmly at Olham.

'Inside the robot was a U-bomb. Our agent did not know how the bomb was to be detonated. but he conjectured that it might be by a particular spoken phrase, a certain group of words. The robot would live the life of the person he killed, entering into his usual activities, his job, his social life. He had been constructed to resemble that person. No one would know the difference.'

Olham's face went sickly chalk.

'The person whom the robot was to impersonate was Spence Olham, a high-ranking official at one of the Research projects. Because this particular project was approaching crucial stage, the presence of an animate bomb, moving toward the centre of the Project—'

Olham stared down at his hands. '*But I'm Olham!*'

'Once the robot had located and killed Olham, it was a simple matter to take over his life. The robot was probably released from the ship eight days ago. The substitution was probably accomplished over the last week end, when Olham went for a short walk in the hills.'

'But I'm Olham.' He turned to Nelson, sitting at the controls. 'Don't you recognize me? You've known me for twenty years. Don't you remember how we went to college together?' He stood up. 'You and I were at the University. We had the same room.' He went toward Nelson.

'Stay away from me!' Nelson snarled.

'Listen. Remember our second year? Remember that girl. What was her name—' He rubbed his forehead. 'The one with the dark hair. The one we met over at Ted's place.'

'Stop!' Nelson waved the gun frantically. 'I don't want to hear any more. You killed him! You . . . machine.'

Olham looked at Nelson. 'You're wrong. I don't know what happened, but the robot never reached me. Something must have gone wrong. maybe the ship crashed.' He turned to Peters. 'I'm Olham. I know it. No transfer was made. I'm the same as I've always been.'

IMPOSTOR - 3b

He touched himself, running his hands over his body. 'There must be some way to prove it. Take me back to Earth. An X-ray examination, a neurological study, anything like that will show you. Or maybe we can find the crashed ship.'

Neither Peters nor Nelson spoke.

'I am Olham,' he said again. 'I know I am. But I can't prove it.'

'The robot,' Peters said, 'would be unaware that he was not the real Spence Olham. He would become Olham in mind as well as in body. He was given an artificial memory system, false recall. He would look like him, have his memories, his thoughts and interests, perform his job.

'But there would be one difference. Inside the robot is a U-bomb, ready to explode at the trigger phrase.' Peters moved a little away. 'That's the one difference. That's why we're taking you to the Moon. They'll disassemble you and remove the bomb. Maybe it will explode, but it won't matter, not there.'

Olham sat down slowly.

'We'll be there soon,' Nelson said.

He lay back, thinking frantically, as the ship dropped slowly down. Under them was the pitted surface of the Moon, the endless expanse of ruin. What could he do? What would save him?

IMPOSTOR - 4a

'Get ready,' Peters said.

In a few minutes he would be dead. Down below he could see a tiny dot, a building of some kind. There were men in the building, the demolition team, waiting to tear him to bits. They would rip him open, pull off his arms and legs, break him apart. When they found no bomb they would be surprised; they would know, but it would be too late.

Olham looked around the small cabin. Nelson was still holding the gun. There was no chance there. If he could get to a doctor, have an examination made—that was the only way. Mary could help him. He thought frantically, his mind racing. Only a few minutes, just a little time left. If he could contact her, get word to her some way.

'Easy,' Peters said. The ship came down slowly, bumping on the rough ground. There was silence.

'Listen,' Olham said thickly. 'I can prove I'm Spence Olham. Get a doctor. Bring him here—'

'There's the squad.' Nelson pointed. 'They're coming.' He glanced nervously at Olham. 'I hope nothing happens.'

'We'll be gone before they start work,' Peters said. 'We'll be out of here in a moment.' He put on his pressure suit. When he had finished he took the gun from Nelson. 'I'll watch him for a moment.'

Nelson put on his pressure suit, hurrying awkwardly. 'How about him?' He indicated Olham. 'Will he need one?'

'No,' Peters shook his head. 'Robots probably don't require oxygen.'

The group of men were almost to the ship. They halted, waiting.

IMPOSTOR - 4b

Peters signalled to them.

'Come on!' He waved his hand and the men approached warily; stiff grotesque figures in their inflated suits.

'If you open the door,' Olham said, 'it means my death. It will be murder.'

'Open the door,' Nelson said. He reached for the handle.

Olham watched him. He saw the man's hand tighten around the metal rod. In a moment the door would swing back, the air in the ship would rush out. He would die, and presently they would realize their mistake. Perhaps at some other time, when there was no war, men might not act this way, hurrying an individual to his death because they were afraid. Everyone was frightened, everyone was willing to sacrifice the individual because of the group fear.

He was being killed because they could not wait to be sure of his guilt. There was not enough time.

He looked at Nelson. Nelson had been his friend for years. They had gone to school together. He had been best man at his wedding. Now Nelson was going to kill him. But Nelson was not wicked; it was not his fault. It was the times. Perhaps it had been the same way during the plagues. When men had shown a spot they probably had been killed, too, without a moment's hesitation, without proof, on suspicion alone. In times of danger there was no other way.

He did not blame them. But he had to live. His life was too precious to be sacrificed. Olham thought quickly. What could he do? Was there anything? He looked around.

'Here goes,' Nelson said.

'You're right,' Olham said. The sound of his own voice surprised him. It was the strength of desperation. 'I have no need of air. Open the door.'

They paused, looking at him in curious alarm.

'Go ahead. Open it. It makes no difference.' Olham's hand disappeared inside his jacket. 'I wonder how far you two can run.'

'Run?'

'You have fifteen seconds to live.' Inside his jacket his fingers twisted, his arm suddenly rigid. He relaxed, smiling a little. 'You were wrong about the trigger phrase. In that respect you were mistaken. Fourteen seconds, now.'

Two shocked faces stared at him from the pressure suits. Then they were struggling, running, tearing the door open. The air shrieked out, spilling into the void. Peters and Nelson bolted out of the ship. Olham came after them. He grasped the door and dragged it shut. The automatic pressure system chugged furiously, restoring the air. Olham let his breath out with a shudder.

One more second—

IMPOSTOR - 4c

Beyond the window the two men had joined the group. The group scattered, running in all directions. One by one they threw themselves down, prone on the ground. Olham seated himself at the control board. He moved the dials into place. As the ship rose up into the air the men below scrambled to their feet and stared up, their mouths open.

'Sorry,' Olham murmured, 'but I've got to get back to Earth.'

He headed the ship back the way it had come.

IMPOSTOR - 5a

It was night. All around the ship crickets chirped, disturbing the chill darkness. Olham bent over the vidscreen. Gradually the image formed; the call had gone through without trouble. He breathed a sigh of relief.

'Mary,' he said. The woman stared at him. She gasped.

'Spence! Where are you? What's happened?'

'I can't tell you. Listen, I have to talk fast. They may break this call off any minute. Go to the Project grounds and get Dr Chamberlain. If he isn't there, get any doctor. Bring him to the house and have him stay there. Have him bring equipment, X-ray, fluoroscope, everything.'

'But— '

'Do as I say. Hurry. Have him get it ready in an hour.' Olham leaned toward the screen. 'Is everything all right? Are you alone?'

'Alone?'

'Is anyone with you? Has . . . has Nelson or anyone contacted you?'

'No, Spence, I don't understand.'

'All right. I'll see you at the house in an hour. And don't tell anyone anything. Get Chamberlain there on any pretext. Say you're very ill.'

He broke the connection and looked at his watch. A moment later he left the ship, stepping down into the darkness. He had a half-mile to go.

He began to walk.

One light showed in the window, the study light. He watched it, kneeling against the fence. There was no sound, no movement of any kind. He held his watch up and read it by starlight. Almost an hour had passed.

Along the street a shoot bug came. It went on.

Olham looked toward the house. The doctor should have already come. He should be inside, waiting with Mary. A thought struck him. Had she been able to leave the house? Perhaps they had intercepted her. Maybe he was moving into a trap.

But what else could he do?

With a doctor's records, photographs and reports, there was a chance, a chance of proof. If he could be examined, if he could remain alive long enough for them to study him——

He could prove it that way. It was probably the only way. His one hope lay inside the house. Dr Chamberlain was a respected man. He was the

IMPOSTOR - 5b

staff doctor for the Project. He would know; his word on the matter would have meaning. He could overcome their hysteria, their madness, with facts.

Madness—That was what it was. If only they could wait, act slowly, take their time. But they could not wait. He had to die, die at once, without proof, without any kind of trial or examination. The simplest test would tell, but they had not time for the simplest test. They could think only of the danger. Danger, and nothing more.

He stood up and moved toward the house. He came up on the porch. At the door he paused, listening. Still no sound. The house was absolutely still.

Too still.

Olham stood on the porch, unmoving. They were trying to be silent inside. Why? It was a small house; only a few feet away, beyond the door, Mary and Dr Chamberlain should be standing. Yet he could hear nothing, no sound of voices, nothing at all. He looked at the door. It was a door he had opened and closed a thousand times, every morning and every night.

He put his hand on the knob. Then, all at once, he reached out and touched the bell instead. The bell pealed, off some place in the back of the house. Olham smiled. He could hear movement.

Mary opened the door. As soon as he saw her face he knew.

IMPOSTOR - 6a

He ran, throwing himself into the bushes. A Security officer shoved Mary out of the way, firing past her. The bushes burst apart. Olham wriggled around the side of the house. He leaped up and ran, racing frantically into the darkness. A searchlight snapped on, a beam of light circling past him.

He crossed the road and squeezed over a fence. He jumped down and made his way across a backyard. Behind him men were coming. Security officers, shouting to each other as they came. Olham gasped for breath, his chest rising and falling.

Her face—He had known at once. The set lips, the terrified, wretched eyes. Suppose he had gone ahead, pushed open the door and entered! They had tapped the call and come at once, as soon as he had broken off. Probably she believed their account. No doubt she thought he was the robot, too.

Olham ran on and on. He was losing the officers, dropping them behind. Apparently they were not much good at running. He climbed a hill and made his way down the other side. In a moment he would be back at the ship. But where to, this time? He slowed down, stopping. He could see the ship already, outlined against the sky, where he had parked it. The settlement was behind him; he was on the outskirts of the wilderness between the inhabited places, where the forests and desolation began. He

IMPOSTOR - 6b

crossed a barren field and entered the trees.

As he came toward it, the door of the ship opened.

Peters stepped out, framed against the light. In his arms was a heavy boris-gun. Olham stopped, rigid. Peters stared around him, into the darkness. 'I know you're there, some place,' he said. 'Come on up here, Olham. There are Security men all around you.'

Olham did not move.

'Listen to me. We will catch you very shortly. Apparently you still do not believe you're the robot. Your call to the woman indicates that you are still under the illusion created by your artificial memories.

'But you *are* the robot. You are the robot, and inside you is the bomb. Any moment the trigger phrase may be spoken, by you, by someone else, by anyone. When that happens the bomb will destroy everything for miles around. The Project, the woman, all of us will be killed. Do you understand?'

Olham said nothing. He was listening. Men were moving toward him, slipping through the woods.

'If you don't come out, we'll catch you. It will be only a matter of time. We no longer plan to remove you to the Moon-base. You will be destroyed on sight and we will have to take the chance that the bomb will detonate. I have ordered every available Security officer into the area. The whole county is being searched, inch by inch. There is no place you can go. Around this wood is a cordon of armed men. You have about six hours left before the last inch is covered.'

Olham moved away. Peters went on speaking; he had not seen him at all. It was too dark to see anyone. But Peters was right. There was no place he could go. He was beyond the settlement, on the outskirts where the woods began. He could hide for a time, but eventually they would catch him.

Only a matter of time.

Olham walked quietly through the wood. Mile by mile, each part of the county was being measured off, laid bare, searched, studied, examined. The cordon was coming all the time, squeezing him into a smaller and smaller space.

What was there left? He had lost the ship, the one hope of escape. They were at his home; his wife was with them, believing, no doubt, that the real Olham had been killed. He clenched his fists. Some place there was a wrecked Outspace needle-ship, and in it the remains of the robot. Somewhere nearby the ship had crashed, crashed and broken up.

And the robot lay inside, destroyed.

A faint hope stirred him. What if he could find the remains? If he could show them the wreckage, the remains of the ship, the robot—

But where? Where would he find it?

IMPOSTOR - 7

He walked on, lost in thought. Some place, not too far off, probably. The ship would have landed close to the Project; the robot would have expected to go the rest of the way on foot. He went up the side of a hill and looked around. Crashed and burned. Was there some clue, some hint? Had he read anything, heard anything? Some place close by, within walking distance. Some wild place, a remote spot where there would be no people.

Suddenly Olham smiled. Crashed and burned—

Sutton Wood.

He increased his pace.

IMPOSTOR - 8a

It was morning. Sunlight filtered down through the broken trees on to the man crouching at the edge of the clearing. Olham glanced up from time to time, listening. They were not far off, only a few minutes away. He smiled.

Down below him, strewn across the clearing and into the charred stumps that had been Sutton Wood, lay a tangled mass of wreckage. In the sunlight it glittered a little, gleaming darkly. He had not had too much trouble finding it. Sutton Wood was a place he knew well; he had climbed around it many times in his life, when he was younger. He had known where he would find the remains. There was one peak that jutted up suddenly, without warning.

A descending ship, unfamiliar with the Wood, had little chance of missing it. And now he squatted, looking down at the ship, or what remained of it.

Olham stood up. He could hear them, only a little distance away, coming together, talking in low tones. He tensed himself. Everything depended on who first saw him. If it were Nelson, he had no chance. Nelson would fire at once. He would be dead before they saw the ship. But if he had time to call out, hold them off for a moment—That was all he needed. Once they saw the ship he would be safe.

But if they fired first—

A charred branch cracked. A figure appeared, coming forward uncertainly. Olham took a deep breath. Only a few seconds remained, perhaps the last seconds in his life. He raised his arms, peering intently.

It was Peters.

'Peters!' Olham waved his arms. Peters lifted his gun, aiming. 'Don't fire!' His voice shook. 'Wait a minute. Look past me, across the clearing.'

'I've found him,' Peters shouted. Security men came pouring out of the burned woods around him.

'Don't shoot. Look past me. The ship, the needle-ship. The Outspace ship. Look!'

Peters hesitated. The gun wavered.

IMPOSTOR - 8b

'It's down there,' Olham said rapidly. 'I knew I'd find it here. The burned wood. Now you believe me. You'll find the remains of the robot in the ship. Look, will you?'

'There is something down there,' one of the men said nervously.

'Shoot him!' a voice said. It was Nelson.

'Wait.' Peters turned sharply. 'I'm in charge. Don't anyone fire. Maybe he's telling the truth.'

'Shoot him,' Nelson said. 'He killed Olham. Any minute he may kill us all. If the bomb goes off——'

'Shut up.' Peters advanced toward the slope. He stared down. 'Look at that.' He waved two men up to him. 'Go down there and see what that is.'

The men raced down the slope, across the clearing. They bent down, poking in the ruins of the ship.

'Well?' Peters called.

Olham held his breath. He smiled a little. It must be there; he had not had time to look, himself, but it had to be there. Suddenly doubt assailed him. Suppose the robot had lived long enough to wander away? Suppose his body had been completely destroyed, burned to ashes by the fire?

He licked his lips. Perspiration came out on his forehead. Nelson was staring at him, his face still livid. His chest rose and fell.

'Kill him,' Nelson said. 'Before he kills us.'

The two men stood up.

'What have you found?' Peters said. He held the gun steady. 'Is there anything there?'

'Looks like something. It's a needle-ship, all right. There's something beside it.'

'I'll look.' Peters strode past Olham. Olham watched him go down the hill and up to the men. The others were following after him, peering to see.

'It's a body of some sort,' Peters said. 'Look at it!'

Olham came along with them. They stood around in a circle, staring down.

On the ground, bent and twisted into a strange shape, was a grotesque form. It looked human, perhaps; except that it was bent so strangely, the arms and legs flung off in all directions. The mouth was open, the eyes stared glassily.

'Like a machine that's run down,' Peters murmured.

Olham smiled feebly. 'Well?' he said.

Peters looked at him. 'I can't believe it. You were telling the truth all the time.'

'The robot never reached me,' Olham said. He took out a cigarette and lit it. 'It was destroyed when the ship crashed. You were all too busy with the war to wonder why an out-of-the-way woods would suddenly catch fire and burn. Now you know.'

IMPOSTOR - 8c

He stood smoking, watching the men. They were dragging the grotesque remains from the ship. The body was stiff, the arms and legs rigid.

'You'll find the bomb, now,' Olham said. The men laid the body on the ground. Peters bent down.

'I think I see the corner of it.' He reached out, touching the body.

The chest of the corpse had been laid open. Within the gaping tear something glinted, something metal. The men stared at the metal without speaking.

'That would have destroyed us all, if it had lived,' Peters said. 'That metal box, there.'

There was silence.

IMPOSTOR - 9

'I think we owe you something,' Peters said to Olham. 'This must have been a nightmare to you. If you hadn't escaped, we would have—' He broke off.

Olham put out his cigarette. 'I knew, of course, that the robot had never reached me. But I had no way of proving it. Sometimes it isn't possible to prove a thing right away. That was the whole trouble. There wasn't any way I could demonstrate that I was myself.'

'How about a vacation?' Peters said. 'I think we might work out a month's vacation for you. You could take it easy, relax.'

'I think right now I want to go home,' Olham said.

'All right, then,' Peters said. 'Whatever you say.'

Nelson had squatted down on the ground, beside the corpse. He reached out toward the glint of metal visible within the chest.

'Don't touch it,' Olham said. 'It might still go off. We'd better let the demolition squad take care of it later on.'

Nelson said nothing. Suddenly he grabbed hold of the metal, reaching his hand inside the chest. He pulled.

'What are you doing?' Olham cried.

Nelson stood up. He was holding on to the metal object. His face was blank with terror. It was a metal knife, an Outspace needle-knife, covered with blood.

'This killed him,' Nelson whispered. 'My friend was killed with this.' He looked at Olham. 'You killed him with this and left him beside the ship.'

Olham was trembling. His teeth chattered. He looked from the knife to the body. 'This can't be Olham,' he said. His mind spun, everything was whirling. 'Was I wrong?'

He gaped.

'But if that's Olham, then I must be—'

He did not complete the sentence, only the first phrase. The blast was visible all the way to Alpha Centauri.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 1a

WHEN dear old Mrs. Hay went back to town after staying with the Burnells she sent the children a doll's house. It was so big that the carter and Pat carried it into the courtyard, and there it stayed, propped up on two wooden horses beside the feed-room door. No harm could come to it; it was summer. And perhaps the smell of paint would have gone off by the time it had to be taken in. For, really, the smell of paint coming from that doll's house ("Sweet of old Mrs. Hay, of course; most sweet and generous!")—but the smell of paint was quite enough to make anyone seriously ill, in Aunt Beryl's opinion. Even before the sacking was taken off. And when it was...

There stood the Doll's house, a dark, oily, spinach green, picked out with bright yellow. Its two solid little chimneys, glued on to the roof, were painted red and white, and the door, gleaming with yellow varnish, was like a little slab of toffee. Four windows, real windows, were divided into panes by a broad streak of

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 1b

green. There was actually a tiny porch, too, painted yellow, with big lumps of congealed paint hanging along the edge.

But perfect, perfect little house! Who could possibly mind the smell. It was part of the joy, part of the newness.

"Open it quickly, someone!"

The hook at the side was stuck fast. Pat prized it open with his penknife, and the whole house front swung back, and—there you were, gazing at one and the same moment into the drawing-room and dining-room, the kitchen and two bedrooms. That is the way for a house to open! Why don't all houses open like that? How much more exciting than peering through the slit of a door into a mean little hall with a hatstand and two umbrellas! That is—isn't it?—what you long to know about a house when you put your hand on the knocker. Perhaps it is the way God opens houses at the dead of night when He is taking a quiet turn with an angel...

"O-oh!" The Burnell children sounded as though they were in despair. It was too marvellous; it was too much for them. They had never seen anything like it in their lives. All the rooms were papered. There were pictures on the walls, painted on the paper, with gold frames complete. Red carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; red plush chairs in the drawing-room, green in the dining-room; tables, beds with real bedclothes, a cradle, a stove,

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 1c

a dresser with tiny plates and one big jug. But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully, was the lamp. It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite little amber lamp with a white globe. It was even filled all ready for lighting, though, of course, you couldn't light it. But there was something inside that looked like oil and moved when you shook it.

The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff as though they had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll's house. They didn't look as though they belonged. But the lamp was perfect. It seemed to smile at Kezia, to say, "I live here." The lamp was real.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 2a

The Burnell children could hardly walk to school fast enough the next morning. They burned to tell everybody, to describe, to—well—to boast about their doll's house before the school-bell rang.

"I'm to tell," said Isabel, "because I'm the eldest. And you two can join in after. But I'm to tell first."

There was nothing to answer. Isabel was bossy, but she was always right, and Lottie and Kezia knew too well the powers that went with being eldest. They brushed through the thick buttercups at the road edge and said nothing.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 2b

"And I'm to choose who's to come and see it first. Mother said I might."

For it had been arranged that while the doll's house stood in the courtyard they might ask the girls at school, two at a time, to come and look. Not to stay to tea, of course, or to come traipsing through the house. But just to stand quietly in the courtyard while Isabel pointed out the beauties, and Lottie and Kezia looked pleased...

But hurry as they might, by the time they had reached the tarred palings of the boys' playground the bell had begun to jangle. They only just had time to whip off their hats and fall into line before the roll was called. Never mind. Isabel tried to make up for it by looking very important and mysterious and by whispering behind her hand to the girls near her, "Got something to tell you at playtime."

Playtime came and Isabel was surrounded. The girls of her class nearly fought to put their arms round her, to walk away with her, to beam flatteringly, to be her special friend. She held quite a court under the huge pine trees at the side of the playground. Nudging, giggling together, the little girls pressed up close. And the only two who stayed outside the ring were the two who were always outside, the little Kelveys. They knew better than to come anywhere near the Burnells.

For the fact was, the school the Burnell

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 2c

children went to was not at all the kind of place their parents would have chosen if there had been any choice. But there was none. It was the only school for miles. And the consequence was all the children of the neighbourhood, the Judge's little girls, the doctor's daughters, the store-keeper's children, the milkman's, were forced to mix together. Not to speak of there being an equal number of rude, rough little boys as well. But the line had to be drawn somewhere. It was drawn at the Kelveys. Many of the children, including the Burnells, were not allowed even to speak to them. They walked past the Kelveys with their heads in the air, and as they set the fashion in all matters of behaviour, the Kelveys were shunned by everybody. Even the teacher had a special voice for them, and a special smile for the other children when Lil Kelvey came up to her desk with a bunch of dreadfully common-looking flowers.

They were the daughters of a spry, hard-working little washerwoman, who went about from house to house by the day. This was awful enough. But where was Mr. Kelvey? Nobody knew for certain. But everybody said he was in prison. So they were the daughters of a washerwoman and a gaolbird. Very nice company for other people's children! And they looked it. Why Mrs. Kelvey made them so conspicuous was hard to understand. The truth was they were dressed in " bits " given to

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 2d

her by the people for whom she worked. Lil, for instance, who was a stout, plain child, with big freckles, came to school in a dress made from a green art-serge table-cloth of the Burnells', with red plush sleeves from the Logans' curtains. Her hat, perched on top of her high forehead, was a grown-up woman's hat, once the property of Miss Lecky, the postmistress. It was turned up at the back and trimmed with a large scarlet quill. What a little guy she looked! It was impossible not to laugh. And her little sister, our Else, wore a long white dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of little boy's boots. But whatever our Else wore she would have looked strange. She was a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous solemn eyes—a little white owl. Nobody had ever seen her smile; she scarcely ever spoke. She went through life holding on to Lil, with a piece of Lil's skirt screwed up in her hand. Where Lil went, our Else followed. In the playground, on the road going to and from school, there was Lil marching in front and our Else holding on behind. Only when she wanted anything, or when she was out of breath, our Else gave Lil a tug, a twitch, and Lil stopped and turned round. The Kelveys never failed to understand each other.

Now they hovered at the edge; you couldn't stop them listening. When the little girls turned round and sneered, Lil, as usual, gave

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 2e

her silly, shamefaced smile, but our Else only looked.

And Isabel's voice, so very proud, went on telling. The carpet made a great sensation, but so did the beds with real bedclothes, and the stove with an oven door.

When she finished Kezia broke in. "You've forgotten the lamp, Isabel."

"Oh, yes," said Isabel, "and there's a teeny little lamp, all made of yellow glass, with a white globe that stands on the dining-room table. You couldn't tell it from a real one."

"The lamp's best of all," cried Kezia. She thought Isabel wasn't making half enough of the little lamp. But nobody paid any attention. Isabel was choosing the two who were to come back with them that afternoon and see it. She chose Emmie Cole and Lena Logan. But when the others knew they were all to have a chance, they couldn't be nice enough to Isabel. One by one they put their arms round Isabel's waist and walked her off. They had something to whisper to her, a secret. "Isabel's *my* friend."

Only the little Kelveys moved away forgotten; there was nothing more for them to hear.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 3

Days passed, and as more children saw the doll's house, the fame of it spread. It became the one subject, the rage. The one question was, "Have you seen Burnells' doll's house? Oh, ain't it lovely!" "Haven't you seen it? Oh, I say!"

Even the dinner hour was given up to talking about it. The little girls sat under the pines eating their thick mutton sandwiches and big slabs of johnny cake spread with butter. While always, as near as they could get, sat the Kelveys, our Else holding on to Lil, listening too, while they chewed their jam sandwiches out of a newspaper soaked with large red blobs.

"Mother," said Kezia, "can't I ask the Kelveys just once?"

"Certainly not, Kezia."

"But why not?"

"Run away, Kezia; you know quite well why not."

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 4a

At last everybody had seen it except them. On that day the subject rather flagged. It was the dinner hour. The children stood together under the pine trees, and suddenly, as they looked at the Kelveys eating out of their paper, always by themselves, always listening, they wanted to be horrid to them. Emmie Cole started the whisper.

"Lil Kelvey's going to be a servant when she grows up."

"O-oh, how awful!" said Isabel Burnell, and she made eyes at Emmie.

Emmie swallowed in a very meaning way and

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 4b

nodded to Isabel as she'd seen her mother do on those occasions.

"It's true—it's true," she said.

Then Lena Logan's little eyes snapped. "Shall I ask her?" she whispered.

"Bet you don't," said Jessie May.

"Pooh, I'm not frightened," said Lena. Suddenly she gave a little squeal and danced in front of the other girls. "Watch! Watch me! Watch me now!" said Lena. And sliding, gliding, dragging one foot, giggling behind her hand, Lena went over to the Kelveys.

Lil looked up from her dinner. She wrapped the rest quickly away. Our Else stopped chewing. What was coming now?

"Is it true you're going to be a servant when you grow up, Lil Kelvey?" shrilled Lena.

Dead silence. But instead of answering, Lil only gave her silly, shamefaced smile. She didn't seem to mind the question at all. What a sell for Lena! The girls began to titter.

Lena couldn't stand that. She put her hands on her hips; she shot forward. "Yah, yer father's in prison!" she hissed, spitefully.

This was such a marvellous thing to have said that the little girls rushed away in a body, deeply, deeply excited, wild with joy. Someone found a long rope, and they began skipping. And never did they skip so high, run in and out so fast, or do such daring things as on that morning.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 5a

In the afternoon Pat called for the Burnell children with the buggy and they drove home. There were visitors. Isabel and Lottie, who liked visitors, went upstairs to change their pinafores. But Kezia thieved out at the back. Nobody was about; she began to swing on the big white gates of the courtyard. Presently, looking along the road, she saw two little dots. They grew bigger, they were coming towards her. Now she could see that one was in front and one close behind. Now she could see that they were the Kelveys. Kezia stopped swinging. She slipped off the gate as if she was going to run away. Then she hesitated. The Kelveys came nearer, and beside them walked their shadows, very long, stretching right across the road with their heads in the buttercups. Kezia clambered back on the gate; she had made up her mind; she swung out.

"Hullo," she said to the passing Kelveys.

They were so astounded that they stopped. Lil gave her silly smile. Our Else stared.

"You can come and see our doll's house if you want to," said Kezia, and she dragged one toe on the ground. But at that Lil turned red and shook her head quickly.

"Why not?" asked Kezia.

Lil gasped, then she said, "Your ma told our ma you wasn't to speak to us."

"Oh, well," said Kezia. She didn't know what to reply. "It doesn't matter. You can

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 5b

come and see our doll's house all the same. Come on. Nobody's looking."

But Lil shook her head still harder.

"Don't you want to?" asked Kezia.

Suddenly there was a twitch, a tug at Lil's skirt. She turned round. Our Else was looking at her with big, imploring eyes; she was frowning; she wanted to go. For a moment Lil looked at our Else very doubtfully. But then our Else twitched her skirt again. She started forward. Kezia led the way. Like two little stray cats they followed across the courtyard to where the doll's house stood.

"There it is," said Kezia.

There was a pause. Lil breathed loudly, almost snorted; our Else was still as stone.

"I'll open it for you," said Kezia kindly. She undid the hook and they looked inside.

"There's the drawing-room and the dining-room, and that's the——"

"Kezia!"

Oh, what a start they gave!

"Kezia!"

It was Aunt Beryl's voice. They turned round. At the back door stood Aunt Beryl, staring as if she couldn't believe what she saw.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 6a

"How dare you ask the little Kelveys into the courtyard?" said her cold, furious voice. "You know as well as I do, you're not allowed to talk to them. Run away, children, run away

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 6b

at once. And don't come back again," said Aunt Beryl. And she stepped into the yard and shooed them out as if they were chickens.

" Off you go immediately ! " she called, cold and proud.

They did not need telling twice. Burning with shame, shrinking together, Lil huddling along like her mother, our Else dazed, somehow they crossed the big courtyard and squeezed through the white gate.

" Wicked, disobedient little girl ! " said Aunt Beryl bitterly to Kezia, and she slammed the doll's house to.

The afternoon had been awful. A letter had come from Willie Brent, a terrifying, threatening letter, saying if she did not meet him that evening in Pulman's Bush, he'd come to the front door and ask the reason why ! But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming.

When the Kelveys were well out of sight of Burnells', they sat down to rest on a big red drainpipe by the side of the road. Lil's cheeks were still burning ; she took off the hat with the quill and held it on her knee. Dreamily they looked over the hay paddocks, past the creek, to the group of wattles where Logan's cows stood waiting to be milked. What were their thoughts ?

THE DOLL'S HOUSE - 6c

Presently our Else nudged up close to her sister. But now she had forgotten the cross lady. She put out a finger and stroked her sister's quill; she smiled her rare smile.

"I seen the little lamp," she said, softly.

Then both were silent once more.

Appendix 3

THE PAGE ONES

The following is a complete list of the titles from which first pages were used in this project. A sample selection of these first pages follows.

a. Five Run Away Together — Enid Blyton
(Famous Five)
1944. London: Knight Books-Hodder and Stoughton, 1974.

b. The Winking Ruby Mystery — Carolyn Keene
(Dana Girls)
1957. London: Sparrow Books-Hutchinson, 1983.

c. Mary Poppins — P.L. Travers
1934. London: Collins, 1964.

d. Matilda — Roald Dahl
1988. London: Puffin Books, 1989.

e. The Silver Chair — C.S. Lewis
(Narnia)
1953. London: Lions-Collins, 1988.

f. King Arthur: The Sword from the Lake — Marilyn Fox
London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1975.

g. This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall — Gordon Korman
(Bruno and Boots)
New York: Apple-Scholastic, 1978.

h. Practice Makes Perfect — Jahnna Beecham
(Sweet Dreams)
Toronto: Bantam Books, 1988.

i. Pardon Me, You're Stepping on my Eyeball — Paul Zindel
London: Bodley Head, 1976.

j. Keeping Secrets — Jamie Suzanne
(Sweet Valley Twins)
Toronto: Bantam Books, 1988.

k. Exiles of Colsec — Douglas Hill
1984. London: Puffin Books, 1985.

l. The Outsiders — S.E. Hinton
1967. London: Lions-Collins, 1976.

m. The Changeover: A Supernatural Romance — Margaret Mahy
1984. London: Teens-Methuen, 1987.

n. The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger — Stephen King
New York: Plume-New American Library, 1982.

o. Bleak House — Charles Dickens
1853. Cambridge MA: Riverside-Houghton Mifflin, 1956.

p. The Songlines — Bruce Chatwin
1987. London: Picador-Pan, 1988.

q. Cat's Eye — Margaret Atwood
1988. Toronto: Seal-McClelland-Bantam, 1989.

r. Pride and Prejudice — Jane Austen
1813. New York: Scholastic, 1975.

Chapter One

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

'GEORGE dear, do settle down and do something,' said George's mother. 'You keep wandering in and out with Timothy, and I am trying to have a rest.'

'Sorry, Mother,' said Georgina, taking hold of Timothy's collar. 'But I feel lonely without the others. Oh I do wish tomorrow would come. I've been without them for three whole weeks already.'

Georgina went to boarding-school with her cousin Anne, and in the holidays she and Anne, and Anne's two brothers, Julian and Dick, usually joined up together and had plenty of fun. Now it was the summer holidays, and already three weeks had gone by. Anne, Dick and Julian had gone away with their father and mother, but Georgina's parents had wanted their little girl with them, so she had not gone.

Now her three cousins were coming the next day to spend the rest of the summer holidays with her at her old home, Kirrin Cottage.

'It will be lovely when they are here,' said George, as she was always called, to Timothy her dog. 'Simply lovely, Timothy. Don't you think so?'

'Woof,' said Timothy and licked George's hand.

George was dressed, as usual, exactly like a boy, in jeans and jersey. She had always wanted to be a boy, and would never answer if she was called Georgina. So

155

The Reader of Books

It's a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister you could ever imagine, they still think that he or she is wonderful.

Some parents go further. They become so blinded by adoration they manage to convince themselves their child has qualities of genius.

Well, there is nothing very wrong with all this. It's the way of the world. It is only when the parents begin telling *us* about the brilliance of their own revolting offspring, that we start shouting, "Bring us a basin! We're going to be sick!"

Chapter One

"Tony Roman, if you ever give me an assignment like this again, I'll strangle you!"

Kit Carson tore a sheet of paper from her typewriter and threw it at the feet of the editor in chief. Then she pulled her black felt hat down over her eyes and announced, "I give up!"

Melanie Billings, a junior working on the pasteup of the advertising section, grumbled, "Darn! This picture is crooked!"

Tony ran a hand through his thick dark hair and grinned. "Ah, yes! Business as usual here at the *Queen Anne High Spectator*—Seattle's finest high-school newspaper!"

Kit slipped another page into the old Underwood typewriter and started pounding furiously on the keys. She held a yellow pencil

One

"I'm dying of curiosity!" Jessica Wakefield cried to her identical twin Elizabeth as they entered their house after school.

"Well, Dad should be home in about half an hour, and then we'll find out what this mystery is all about," said Elizabeth. She dropped her books on the counter of the Wakefields' Spanish-tiled kitchen and then poured herself a glass of milk.

"Did he give you any clue about what it is?" Jessica asked, her blue-green eyes sparkling.

Elizabeth sighed and threw up her hands. This was the third time that Jessica had asked her the same question. But Elizabeth could never stay annoyed at her sister for long. Being twins made them as close as any two people could be. From

1

DREAM AND NIGHTMARE

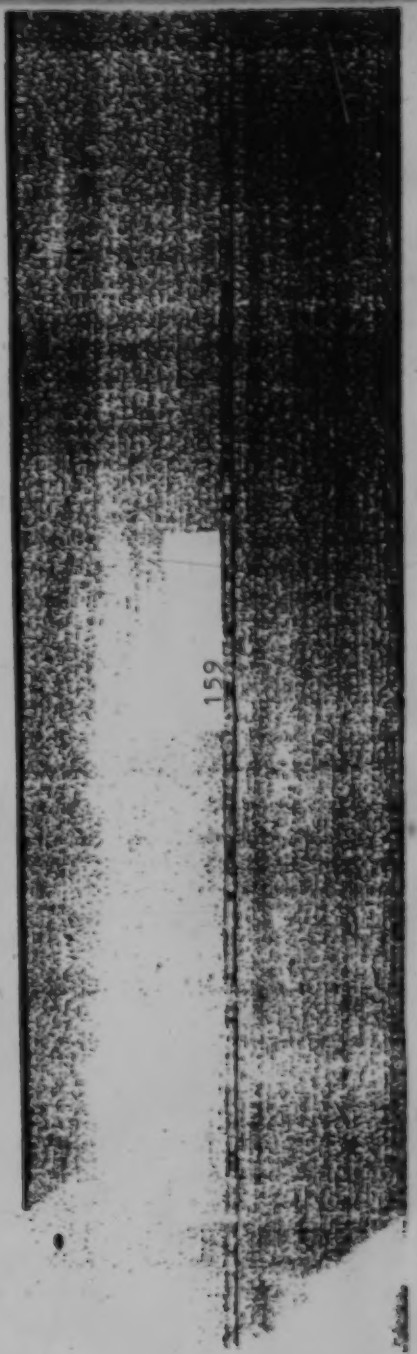
The broad chamber, with walls and low ceiling of blank, colourless metal, lay in shadow and silence. Only the muted glow from a computer screen, set into one wall of the area, interrupted the darkness. But nothing interrupted the stillness.

It was the empty, gloomy stillness of a long-forgotten tomb. And it was made all the more tomb-like by the twelve containers fastened solidly to the metal floor in the centre of the area.

In shape they were like caskets, or large coffins, made of sturdy condensed plastic. But inside, they were softly padded – the padding moulded to the individual shapes of the twelve bodies that lay within. Youthful human bodies, as silent and still as everything else in the area, eyes closed, with no sign of heartbeat or breathing.

But in the sides of the containers, behind the padding, were complex devices that worked to nourish, to preserve and support life. Through the padding a host of needles reached out to thrust deeply beneath the skin of the bodies. Other parts of the skin were covered with the electrodes of monitors and scanners. And so the bodies were healthy and alive.

Now and then a group of muscles might ripple and flex uncannily, but the movement was caused by a gentle shock from an electrode, to maintain muscle tone and fitness. The minds within the bodies felt no movement. The minds were in a sleep that went beyond sleep, a coma of life in suspension.



1
Warnings

Although the label on the hair shampoo said *Paris* and had a picture of a beautiful girl with the Eiffel Tower behind her bare shoulder, it was forced to tell the truth in tiny print under the picture. *Made in New Zealand*, it said, *Wisdom Laboratories, Paraparaumu.*

Just for a moment Laura had had a dream of washing her hair and coming out from under the shower to find she was not only marvellously beautiful but also transported to Paris. However, there was no point in washing her hair if she were only going to be moved as far as Paraparaumu. Besides, she knew her hair would not dry in time for school, and she would spend half the morning with chilly ears. These were facts of everyday life, and being made in New Zealand was another. You couldn't really think your way into being another person with a different morning ahead of you, or shampoo yourself into a beautiful city full of artists drinking wine and eating pancakes cooked in brandy.

Outside in the kitchen the kettle screamed furiously, begging to be taken off the stove. Laura, startled, emerged from under the shower only to discover there was no towel on the rail. She could hear Kate, her mother, moving about in the room next door, putting the kettle out of its misery, and tried to shake herself dry as a dog does though she knew it could never work.

"There's no towel, Mum," she called fretfully, but as she spoke she saw a towel in a heap by the door and

The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed.

The desert was the apotheosis of all deserts, huge, standing to the sky for what might have been parsecs in all directions. White; blinding; waterless; without feature save for the faint, cloudy haze of the mountains which sketched themselves on the horizon and the devil-grass which brought sweet dreams, nightmares, death. An occasional tombstone sign pointed the way, for once the drifted track that cut its way through the thick crust of alkali had been a highway and coaches had followed it. The world had moved on since then. The world had emptied.

The gunslinger walked stolidly, not hurrying, not loafing. A hide waterbag was slung around his middle like a bloated sausage. It was almost full. He had progressed through the *khef* over many years, and had reached the fifth level. At the seventh or eighth, he would not have been thirsty; he could have watched his own body dehydrate with clinical, detached attention, watering its crevices and dark inner hollows only when his logic told him it must be done. He was not seventh or eighth. He was fifth. So he was thirsty, although he had no particular urge to drink. In a vague way, all this pleased him. It was romantic.